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CONTENTS

Editorial	5
French and Spanish Cartography of Alabama, by Jack D. L. Holmes	7
Charles Strachan in Mobile: The Frontier Ordeal of a Scottish Factor, 1764-1768, by John D. Born, Jr.	23
Economics and Politics in the 1860 Presidential Election in Alabama, by Durwood Long	43
The Birmingham & Southeastern Railroad, by Michael J. Dunn, III	59
Mobile and the Visit by Woodrow Wilson, by Derrell Roberts	81
A Hoosier Regiment in Alabama, by Arville L. Funk	91
A Description and History of Blount County, by George Powell	95
Contributors	133

EDITORIAL

This issue of the *Alabama Historical Quarterly* contains articles spanning the history of Alabama from the colonial period to the present. An earlier article on Woodrow Wilson's Mobile visit was published in Volume XIX of the *Quarterly*. As Mr. Roberts' contribution emphasizes the social rather than the political aspects, it has been considered not to be repetitious. The last article in this number of the *Quarterly* is a reprint of one of the Alabama Historical Society's early publications which has become increasingly rare. In keeping with the policy of the *Quarterly* of making available local and county histories, it is herein reprinted.—P. A. B.

THE PROBLEM OF THE ALGEBRA

INTRODUCTION

The problem of the algebra is to find a way to represent the elements of a set in such a way that the operations of the algebra can be performed on them. This is done by using a set of symbols, called the alphabet, to represent the elements. The operations are then defined by rules that specify how the symbols are to be combined. The problem is to find a way to represent the elements of a set in such a way that the operations of the algebra can be performed on them. This is done by using a set of symbols, called the alphabet, to represent the elements. The operations are then defined by rules that specify how the symbols are to be combined. The problem is to find a way to represent the elements of a set in such a way that the operations of the algebra can be performed on them. This is done by using a set of symbols, called the alphabet, to represent the elements. The operations are then defined by rules that specify how the symbols are to be combined.

It is the purpose of this paper to

FRENCH AND SPANISH CARTOGRAPHY OF ALABAMA

By

Jack D. L. Holmes*

For almost four centuries French and Spanish cartographers explored the southeastern United States with compass and pen in constructing their many maps. An anonymous map-maker drew up in 1511 what may be the earliest extant map of the Gulf of Mexico, which includes part of Alabama.¹ Numerous general maps of the Gulf and specialized maps featuring portions of the coast and interior of the Floridas and Louisiana have been reproduced in handsome, and often expensive, volumes.² There are, however, in French, Cuban and Spanish archives literally hundreds of unpublished plans, charts, maps and drawings which vividly illustrate the early history of Alabama. Check-lists have been compiled of Alabama maps³ and maps in both French and Spanish archives covering Louisiana.⁴

*Research on early American maps was made possible through a Fulbright Research Grant to Spain during 1961 and 1962, and again to Spain, the British Isles, Portugal and France during the summer of 1964 under a grant from the University of Alabama Research Council, Project 463. The compiler is associate professor of history at the Birmingham Center of the University of Alabama.

¹Academia Real de Historia, *Mapas espanoles de America, siglos xv-xvii* (Madrid, 1951), #5.

²*Ibid.*; Servicio Geografico del Ejercito and Archivo del Servicio Historico Militar (Madrid), *Cartografia de Ultramar*, Carpeta II: *Estados Unidos y Canada* (2 vols.; Madrid, 1953); E. M. Morrison, *The American South, an Historical Atlas* (3 vols.; Athens, Ohio, 1964-1965), I; Pedro Torres Lanzas

³For example, see Rucker Agee (comp.), "Maps of Alabama," Unpublished manuscript written to illustrate the exhibition of the Rucker Agee Collection at the Birmingham Public Library, January 28-February 17, 1955; Woodbury Lowery, *The Lowery Collection, A Descriptive List of Maps of the Spanish Possessions within the Present Limits of the United States, 1502-1820*, Ed. with notes by Philip Lee Phillips (Washington, 1912).

⁴Jack D. L. Holmes (comp.), "Maps, Plans and Charts of Louisiana in Spanish and Cuban Archives: a Checklist," *Louisiana Studies*, 11, No. 4 (Winter, 1963), 183-203; Jack D. L. Holmes (comp.), "Maps, Plans and Charts of Louisiana in Paris Archives: a Checklist," *Louisiana Studies*, scheduled for publication in 1965.

Little has been done, however, in listing the materials on Alabama which have not been printed. The accompanying checklist of seventy-two items mainly in the eighteenth-century may be useful to geographers and historians interested in the cartographical background of the state.

In Spain the following archives and/or libraries were consulted: Museo Naval (Madrid), Archivo del Servicio Historico Militar (Madrid), Servicio Geografico del Ejercito (Madrid), Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid), Archivo Historico Nacional (Madrid), Archivo General de Simancas, Archivo Museo D. Alvaro de Bazan Marina de Guerra (El Viso del Marques), and the Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla). In France the best repositories of maps, charts and plans are the Service Hydrographique de Marine, 13 Rue de l'Universite, in Paris; the Collection d'Anville, Bibliotheque National (Paris); and the Archives Nationales (Paris). Because of present political conditions, it was impossible to visit the Archivo Nacional de Cuba, but the present writer made use of an excellent catalog of the holdings of the Cuban archives.⁵

⁵Archivo Nacional de Cuba, *Catalogo de los Mapas, Planos, Croquis y Arboles genealogicos existentes en el Archivo Nacional de Cuba* (4 vols.; Havana, 1951-1956).

MAPS, PLANS AND CHARTS OF COLONIAL ALABAMA IN FRENCH AND SPANISH ARCHIVES

Compiled by
Jack D. L. Holmes

Gulf Coast

1. Soupart. "Carte de la Cote de la Louisiane depuis la Cote de Ouest de la Floride jusqu'a l'Ouest de la Riviere du Mississipy." Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris (hereafter cited as BN), Collection d'Anville (hereafter cited as CA), No. 8801. Brown and gray water colors on manila paper. Sketch. Approximately 36" x 12".

2. "Carte de la Coste du Nouveau Biloxy avec les Isles des Environs pour faire voir la situation de la Rade de l'Isle aux Vaisseaux, et celle de l'Isle de la Chandeleur." BN, CA, No. 8817. Colors. Territory covered from Isle Bienville to Baye St. Louis.

3. "Carte de la Coste de la Floride depuis le Baye de la Mobile jusqu'aux cayes de St. Martin. BN, CA, No. 8807. Printed.

4. "Plan du Terrain que occupe les concessions de Messieurs les Marquis de Mezieres et des Marches aux Nouveaux Biloxy a la Louissiane." Archives Nationales, Paris (hereafter cited as AN), Cartes, K-1232, No. 52.

5. "Carte de partie de la Coste du Nouveau Biloxy, environ douze cent toises a l'est et a l'Ouest de l'endroit ou l'on doit placer le Fort." Service Hydrographique, Naval Ministry, Paris (hereafter cited as SH), Amerique Septentrionale, Cartes Particulieres, Etats Unis. *circa* 1740. Colors. Approximately seven feet by fourteen inches.

6. "Carte de la Coste et des environs du fleuve de Mississipi, 1699." Sketched by I.M.F., SH, AS, Cartes Particulieres, Etats-Unis. Incomplete sketch in colors.

7. Carte de la Coste et des environs du fleuve de Mississipi, 1699." SH, AS, Cours d'Eau. About thirty inches by twenty. Shows Gulf Coast from the Bahamas to Rio Bravo del Norte (Rio Grande).

8. Nicolas de Fer (Geographer of Mons. le Dauphin, 1646-1720), "Les costes aux environs de la Riviere de Misisipi decouverte par M. de la Salle en 1683, et reconnues par Mr. le Chevalier d'Iberville en 1698 et 1699." SH, AS, Cours d'Eau. See Woodbury Lowery, *A Descriptive List of Maps of the Spanish Possessions within the Present Limits of the United States, 1502-1820* (Washington, 1912), 219.

9. "Carte Nouvelle et tres exacte d'une partie de la Louisianne et de l'Isle de Cuba en 1718." SH, AS, Cours d'Eau. See *ibid.*, 237.

10. F. Saucier. "Carte particuliere pour pour (*sic*) parvenu a la connoissance de la distance qui il ya du fleuve St. Louis a la Riviere de la Mobille, en connoissant aussy le cours de la Riviere desesasoux et de celle des Pascagoula. Na. la ligne ponctue en rouge marque le terrain qui contienant tous les villages T-Chactas." A la Nlle. Orleans le 8e. May 1738. SH, AS, Cours d'Eau.

11. N. B. (Jacques Nicolas Bellin, 1703-1772). "Partie de la Coste de la Louisiane et de la Floride depuis le Mississipi jusqu'a St. Marc d'Apalache dressee sur les Manuscrits du Depost des Plans de la Marine, par N. B. Ingr. du Roy et de la Marine." 1743. SH, AS, Cours d'Eau.

12. Jacques Nicolas Bellin. "Partie de la Coste de la Louisiane et de la Floride depuis le Mississipi jusqu'a St. Marc d'Apalache dressee sur les manuscrits du depost des Plans de la Marine, par N. B. Ingr. du Roy et de la Marine." 1744. BN, CA, No. 8806. See Lowery, *Descriptive List*, 290.

13. Untitled map of the Gulf, and the Mississippi River, from Pensacola to Baton Rouge, and from the thirty-first parallel to the mouth of the Mississippi. *circa* 1798. SH, AS, Cours d'Eau. Colors.

14. "Seno Mejicano, Plano que comprehende desde el Lago de Movila hasta la Bahia de Panzacola." *circa* 1785. Museo Naval (Madrid) (hereafter abbreviated as MN), VI, A, No. 5.

15. (Jose de Evia?). Undated map of the Gulf of Mexico, from the Pearl River to Point San Miguel, showing part of Cuba. MN, VI, B, No. 15.

16. Simon de Evia. "Plano y descripcion de la Provincia de la Luaciana en la Costa del N. te del Seno Mexicano..." 1736. Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid) (hereafter abbreviated as BNE), M-1-142.

17. "Province de la Louisianne M.DCC.XLIII." 1743. BNE, M-1-326.

18. Francisco Mathias Celi. "Plano de la Provincia de Luisiana." 1744. BNE, M-1-189.

19. Juan Josef Elixio de la Puente. "Descripcion geografica de la parte que los espanoles poseen actualmente en el continente de la Florida..." Havana, May 25, 1765. MN, showcase of museum. Colors include red, blue, yellow and brown.

20. William Faden. "An accurate chart of the Coast of West Florida and the Coast of Louisiana surveyed in the Years 1764, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 70, & 71, by George Gauld..." Printed February 4, 1803. Copy in Servicio Geografico del Ejercito (Madrid), and published in their *Cartografia de Ultramar*, Carpenta II: *Estados Unidos y Canada* (2 vols.; Madrid, 1953) No. 106. See Lowery, *Descriptive List*, 338. There is a published version of this map dated 1823.

21. M. Bonne (Rigobert Bonne). "Copia de la Carta de la Luisiana y la Florida." *circa* 1783. Servicio Historico Militar y del Ejercito (Madrid) (hereafter abbreviated as ASHM), 5-1-9-14, attached to Josef de Gabriel y Estenoz's manuscript *Descripcion historica de la Luisiana*. The map has been printed in Jack D. L. Holmes (ed.), *Documentos ineditos para la historia de la Luisiana, 1792-1810* (Madrid, 1963), No. 4. See Lowery, *Descriptive List*, 397.

22. Sr. Broutin (son of Capt. Broutin, Engineer-in-Chief of French Louisiana). "Carte de la Louisiane." MN, VI-A-No. 6, and printed in Holmes (ed.), *Documentos de Luisiana*, No. 1. The original map, in colors of red and green, with a yellow line along the Mississippi which separates Spanish and English possessions (*circa* 1763), is based on the explorations and charting of various French engineers in Louisiana. Approximately six feet by three feet!

23. "Provincias de Florida." *circa* 1763. MN, VI-B, No. 6. Green outlines. Has list of latitudes and longitudes of various posts in Louisiana and West Florida. See Lowery, *Descriptive List*, 331.

24. Jose de Evia. "Descripcion de la costa y sondas desde la Isla del Cuerno hasta la pasa del Sur del Rio Misisipi" 1784. MN, VI-A-No. 9.

25. Jose de Evia. "Descripcion hidrografica de una parte de la Costa de la Florida Occidental, desde el Cavo de San Blas hasta el Rio de Pascagulas" 1784. MN, VI-B-No. 5.

26. William Faden. "The United States of North America: with the British Territories and those of Spain, According to the Treaty of 1784." 1793. MN, VI-C-No. 13. This is probably the same map engraved by Faden in 1785. See Carl I. Wheat, *Mapping the Trans-Mississippi West, 1540-1861* (5 vols.; San Francisco, 1957-1963), 1, 235.

27. "Plano del terreno comprehendido entre Manchak en el Ro. Misisipi hasta el Puerto de Panzacola inclusive." (*circa* 1808). Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla), Planos, Luisiana y Floridas (hereafter cited as AGI), No. 231.

28. Francisco Armero. "Carta de las Costas de la Escambia, Alabama, y Bocas del Rio Misisipi, la Luisiana, Tejas, con la Provincia del Nuevo Santander en el Golfo de Mexico" 1846. MN, VI-B-No. 12.

ALABAMA: GENERAL

29. Gilberto Guillemard. "Plano topographico copiado de varias ingleses, que comprehende los Establecimientos Americanos al occidente de los Montes Apalaches . . ." Nueva Orleans, September 25, 1787. Archivo Historico Nacional (Madrid), hereafter cited as AHN. This map has been published in Miguel Gomez del Campillo (ed.), *Relaciones diplomaticas entre Espana y los Estados Unidos segun los documentos del Archivo Historico Nacional* (2 vols.; Madrid, 1944-1945), I, opposite 78.

30. Undated, untitled sketch of the Mississippi, Ohio, and Tennessee Rivers. (September 1, 1788 according to documents in AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 2361). AGI, No. 120.

31. Robert Sayer. "A New and General Map of the Southern Dominions belonging to the U.S. of A . . . and the Spanish Possessions of Louisiana and Florida." Printed for Robert Sayer, London, January 1, 1788. MN, VI-C-No. 1.

32. Untitled map showing the lands of the Virginia Yasou Company and the South Carolina Yasou Company, *circa* 1790. Shown are the Alabama, Mobile and Tombigbee Rivers. AHN. The map has been published in Gomez del Campillo (ed.), *Relaciones diplomaticas*, I, opposite 326; and in Manuel Serrano y Sanz, *El brigadier Jaime Wilkinson y sus tratos con Espana . . .* (Madrid, 1915), 26.

33. Baron de Carondelet. Untitled map of the Old-Southwest from the junction of Illinois and Mississippi in North to below Natchez in South, from the Mississippi River to the Appalachians. *circa* 1794. AGI, No. 209. The map shows location of Alabama forts and frontier American settlements from the Ohio River to the Tennessee River. Also printed in *ibid.*, opposite 48.

34. Joseph Warin (aide an dengeener to General George Henri Victor Collot). "Chart of the Source of the Mobile and of the River Yazoo. Including a part of the Course of the Mississippi from the River Margot to the Natchez." 1796. SH, AS, Cartes Anciennes. This has been printed in the atlas (Plate 33)

of Collot, *A Journey in North America* . . . (2 vols. & atlas; Paris, 1826; reprinted Florence, 1924).

35. Regis du Roullet. "Carte du cours de la Riviere aux Perles depuis son embouchure jusqu'a Boukfouka et du Chemin qui est depuis le Fort de la Mobile jusques au Dt. Boukfouka." 1732. SH, AS, Cours d'Eau. Colors, approximately 36 by 18 inches.

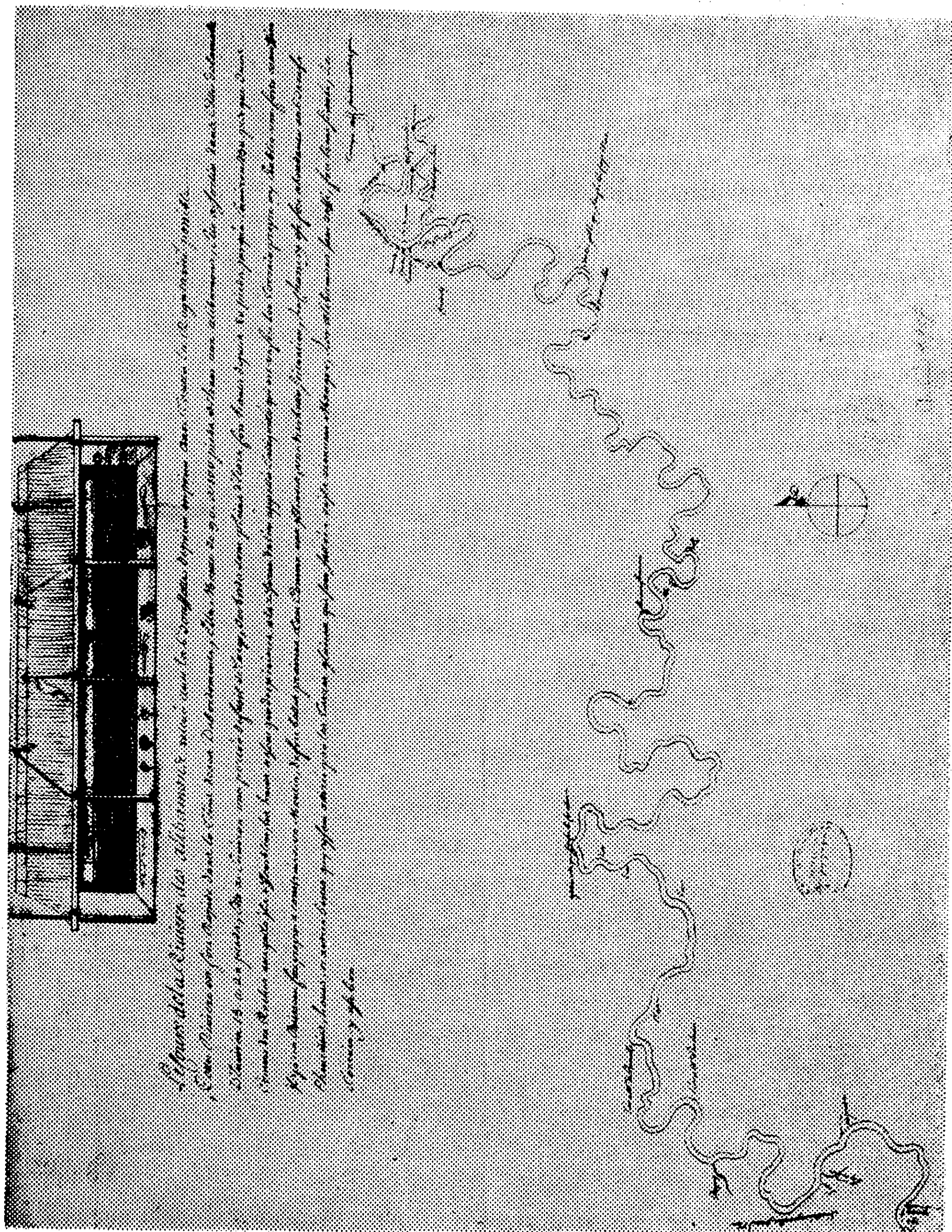
36. Regis du Roullet. "Carte du chemin du Fort de la Mobille aux villages des Tchaktas levee par estimee en 1732 le 14 juillet par . . ." SH, AS, Cartes Particulieres, Etats-Unis. Colors, about thirty-six by fourteen inches.

37. Regis du Roullet. "Carte du cours de la Riviere aux Perles depuis Boukfouka jusqu'a son embouchure qui est a la Passe a Dion Visavis l'Isle aux Oyes levee a l'Estime le 14 juillet 1732 par Monsieur . . ." SH, AS, Cours d'Eau. Colors, about thirty-six by eighteen inches.

38. Regis du Roullet. "Carte du cours de la Riviere aux Perles depuis son embouchure qui est au Lack Pontchartrain jusqu'a Boukfouka. Levee en 1732 par Mr. Regis qui a estime les distances de sa route et les airs de Vents avec une Boussolle de 4 a 5 pouces . . ." Redrawn according to map of Philippe Buache de l'ac, December 1737. Paris, August 25, 1750. SH, AS, Cours d'Eau. Colors, about four by three feet.

39. "Le cours de la Riviere des Alibamons reclue avec le Boussolle . . ." BN, CA, No. 8816. In addition to a sketch of the river and settlements along its banks, there is an interesting inset drawing of an Indian council hut or 'Caben de Conseille.'

40. "Carte pour donner une idee de la positions des Villages sauvages ou l'on voit par une ligne ponctuee en rouge la separation des sauvages qui tiennent pour nous d'avec ceux qui tiennent pour les Englois." *circa* 1730 (?). #SH AS, Cartes Particulieres, Etats-Unis. Colors. Area covered from Mobile to Pascagoula and indicates Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Talapousa (Creek) towns.



Courtesy of Bibliothèque National

41. Untitled map showing Indian villages on Cherokee (Tennessee) River with numbers in the various tribes. SH, AS, Cartes Particulieres, Etats-Unis. Colors, about eighteen by twenty-four inches.

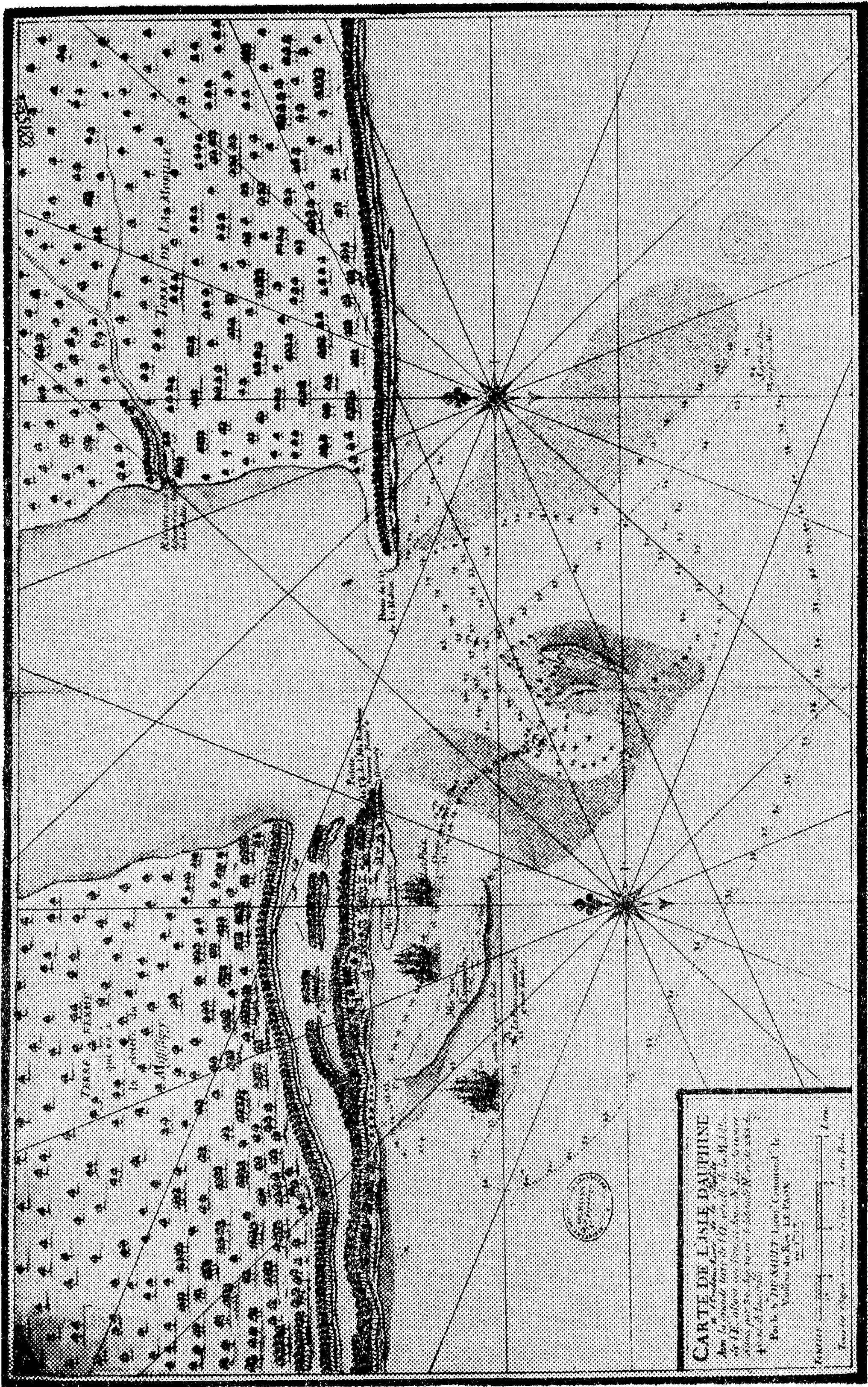
42. "Carte de l'Isle de Saint Domingue, ainsy que celles de Cuba, de la Jamaïque, avec Le Canal de Bahama, et le province de La Louissianne, L'entree de fleuve de Saint Louis. . . ." *circa* 1720. Archives Nationales (Paris), Maps, N-111-2. A general map of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, which features a highly imaginative interpretation of the coast line and rivers of Alabama. Colors.

43. "Carte de la Province de la Louissianne." AN, Maps, N-111-1. Map featuring Alabama and Mississippi, but also including Choctaw Indian villages. Colors.

44. "Plano del rio de la Movila en latitud de 30 grados y 10 minutos cuya conquista e igualmente la de su fortificacion y habitaciones se ha hecho por el brig. y comandante general de la Provincia de la Luis. el 12 de marzo de 1780, Dn. Bernardo de Galvez." Archivo General de Simancas (Spain), Mapas, XV-6. The size is 305 by 298 mm. Originally in the papers of the late Marques de Sonora (Jose de Galvez, 1720-1787). The sketch shows the location of the town of Mobile, its defenses, and the ships which attacked the English defenders in 1780.

45. "Plano del Rio de la Movila situado en la Florida Occidental, y se halla su Punta del Este por la Latitud de 30° 11' 00", y en longitud de 286° 52' 00" del Meridiano de Tenerife." *circa* 1780. Black sketch showing fort and town of Mobile. MN, VI-B-No. 9.

46. (Stephen Minor?). Untitled Plan of the territory between the Mobile Bay and the Tennessee River. *circa* 1799. AGI, No. 202. Details on the survey, probably done by Spanish commissioner Minor are in AGI, PC, leg. 2355.



Courtesy of Biblitheque Nationale
48. MAP OF DAUPHIN ISLAND

MOBILE AND DAUPHIN ISLAND

47. "Plano del Fuerte Conde de la Movila." ASHM, K-b-9-41. Engineer's plan of the fortification at Mobile. Colors.

48. Sr. du Sault. "Carte de l'Isle Dauphine a la'embouchure de la Mobile . . . par . . . lieut. commandt. le Vaisseau du Roy Le Paon." 1717. BN, CA, No. 8815 *bis*. Three feet by two feet. Colors.

49. "Ydee ou plan du Chenal par lequel Est Sorty la navire, la Prise et le Vaisseau du Roy le Pan, du fort de l'Ile Dauphine le 15me. May 1717." BN, CA, No. 8815.

50. "Plan du post et rade de l'Isle Dauphine." May 15, 1717. AGI, No. 35. Colors.

51. "Carte de l'Isle daufine, ses environs." BN, CA, No. 8814. About forty-eight inches by twelve inches. Shows houses, fort, Mobile Point.

52. Untitled fragment of plan of fortifications for Fort Conde de Mobille, *circa* 1735-1738. AGI, No. 36.

53. Untitled rough sketch of Fort Conde de Mobille. April 26, 1736. ,AGI, No. 38.

54. Dessat. Pabellon de Mobile, 27 juin 1752. AGI, PC, leg. 2357, and printed in Diego Angulo Iniguez, *Planos de Monumentos arquitectonicos de America y Filipinas existentes en el Archivo de Indias* (3 vols.; Sevilla, 1934), 11, plate 140.

55. Untitled sketches of Mobile fortification bastion, 1760. AGI, Nos. 61, 62. Labeled, "Figure de la platte forme du Bastion Sud ouest & S. O'est."

56. Gilberto Guillemard. "Fachada y elevacion del quartel proyectado en el Fuerte Carlota de la Mobila, Nueva Orleans 6 de mayo 1793." Archivo General de Simancas, Mapas, VII-75. 448 x 330 mms. Colors and ink. Explanatory letter is Luis de

las Casas to Conde del Campo de Alange, La Habana, June 12, 1793, AGS, Guerra Moderna, leg. 7240, No. 310.

57. Jose (Joseph) Collins. "Plano que se refiere a haber sido medido y lindado el solar curial de 65 pies de frente sobre la Calle Real, con 150 de frente sobre la calle Iglesia, con la profundidad, segun las estacas y lineas representadas; igualmente el solar de la Iglesia de 85 pies de frente sobre la Calle Real..." Mobile, 1807. Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Section of Floridas, leg. 10, No. 26. Size: 20 x 31 cms.

58. Antonio de Arango. "Plano del Castillo de Movila." *circa* 1812. Redrawn by Nicolas deFiniels. ASHM, K-b-4-71. Colors. Features two-story plan, with fold-out part of map for upper story.

59. Vicente Sebastian Pintado. "Plano que existe en el expediente en que el comandante Francisco Collell pide el titulo de terrenos que le fueron cedidos en Mobila." 1815. Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Floridas, Leg. 11, No. 37. 19½ x 31 cms.

TOMBIGBEE RIVER POSTS

60. Deverges. "Pabellon de Ft. Tombecbe." July 20, 1759. AGI, BC, leg. #2357. Printed in Angulo Iniguez, *Planos de monumentos*, plate 142.

61. Deverges. "Cuartel de Ft. Tombecbe." December 8, 1759. AGI, PC, leg. 2357. Printed in *ibid.*, plate 141.

62. Deverges. "Cuerpo de guardia y carcel, Ft. Tombecbe." June 12, 1761. Printed in *ibid.*, plate 143, from original in AGI, PC, leg. 2357.

63. Untitled sketch of a horseshoe bend in the Tombigbee River illustrating position of lands belonging to "Whaker" (Abraham Walker?), Baker (John Baker?), and Joyce (John Joyce?). AGI, No. 121. According to documents in AGI, PC, leg. 2361, the sketch is about 1788; distances are indicated.

64. Antonio Palao. Untitled drawing of Ft. Confederacion on the Tombigbee. Confederacion, June 24, 1794. AGI, No. 165. A typical frontier fort designed to defend the Spanish post on the Tombigbee River drawn by the commandant.

65. Antonio Palao. Untitled sketch of Ft. Confederacion, which indicates two-story block-house with emplacements for cannon. Confederacion, June 25, 1794. AGI, No. 166.

66. Antonio Palao. "Plano y Perfil del Fuerte de la Confederacion." Confederacion, August 12, 1794. AGI, No. 164. A partially destroyed engineer's drawing of the fortifications, showing location of various buildings within the fort. The middle section of the plate is missing.

67. Antonio Palao. "Plano o Perfil de la estacada puesta sobre el Malecon del Frente de la Rivera del Fuerte de la Confederacion en el biejo Tombecbe." Confederacion, September 4, 1794. AGI, No. 161. Military sketch showing details of door, stockade and trench bulwark.

68. Antonio Palao. "Plano o Perfil de la estacada, y Puerta puesta en el Recinto del Fuerte de la Confederacion." Confederacion, September 4, 1794. AGI, No. 163. Similar to No. 67 above, but a different gate of the fort.

69. Antonio Palao. "Plano del estado y Posicion en que se hallan los fuegos de la Casa Fuerte, y la de los angulos de los francos, hallandose colocados los canones de dha. casa fuerte en el segundo alto." (Confederacion, September 11, 1794, as indicated in letter, Palao to Carondelet, AGI, PC, leg. 1574). AGI, No. 167. Drawing No. I of a series of three showing fire-power and angles of cannon protection of the fort, this mistakenly says it represents the second floor fire, when it is actually the first floor.

70. Antonio Palao. "Plano. . . ." (same as above). AGI, No. 168. Drawing No. 2 of a series of three, which shows fire-power and angles from second floor of block-house.

71. Antonio Palao. Untitled drawing which demonstrates the building plans and techniques for the blockhouse of Ft. Confederacion. Drawing No. 3 of a series of three, described above, No. 69. AGI, No. 169.

72. Antonio Palao. Untitled sketch of lay-out and position of Ft. San Estevan de Tombigbee. (June 20, 1795, as indicated from letter of Palao to Carondelet, AGI, PC, leg. 134-b). AGI, No. 171. Outlines of fort showing actual construction as of that date. Done in brown ink.

CHARLES STRACHAN IN MOBILE:

THE FRONTIER ORDEAL

OF A SCOTTISH FACTOR, 1764-1768

By John D. Born, Jr.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the territorial holdings of Great Britain were increased in several areas of North America. Among these British acquisitions was the province of West Florida with northern and southern boundaries extending from a line thirty-two degrees and twenty-eight minutes down to the Gulf of Mexico. The eastern boundary of the colony was fixed at the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee rivers while the western boundary was placed at the Mississippi River and Lake Ponchartrain.¹ Thus the colony roughly comprised a rectangle which included portions of the present states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

British military occupancy was effected during the summer of 1763 and shortly thereafter an outburst of remarkable contemporary accounts written in the colony indicated that West Florida possessed tremendous commercial potential. In official reports, personal letters, and diaries, an impressive number of travelers, governmental officials, and occupying troops described not only the extensive flora and fauna, natural resources, and navigable rivers, but also the great economic advantages to be enjoyed by those who settled in West Florida. These accounts were especially laudatory about the proximity of Pensacola, the new capital, and Mobile, an old French settlement, to the rich

¹Cecil Johnson presents an excellent brief account in **British West Florida, 1763-1783** (New Haven, 1943) and Clinton Newton Howard covers the early history of the colony in **The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769** (Berkeley, 1947).

Spanish colonies in the South.² Optimistic ideas of a rich future for West Floridians seemed to flow from every quarter. Even the provincial governor, George Johnstone, a brawling Scot with a questionable naval record, joined the ranks of the promoters of West Florida.³ At one point he became so convinced that Pensacola would become the leading port-city of North America that he was prompted to write:

Panzacola in a few hours can receive the Produce of a circumference of One hundred and fifty miles round; such is the width and so numerous are in the Trenches of its very Commodious Bay; it has been remarked in all Ages that Cities never flourished from the natural Fertility alone of the Plantation on which they stood; it is commerce only that gather together those great Societies which constitute Towns; it was thro it that anciently Tyre, Sidon, Carthage, Colchos [*sic*], and Palmyra rose, tho built in Deserts and on sand; and in modern times we find that their situations have not hindered Amsterdam, Venice, and Genoa from being great and populous.⁴

The British government was visibly impressed by these glowing accounts of West Florida's commercial potential; so much so that the Board of Trade made several recommendations to Governor Johnstone designed to accelerate the economic growth of the colony. The Board's suggestions included a liberal land-grant program for war veterans mustered from the

²Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida* (Philadelphia, 1775), 10-11, 205-222; N. Bossu, *Travels Through that Part of North America formerly called Louisiana*, trans. John R. Foster, (London, 1771), 222; Frank Heywood Hodder (ed.), *Captain Philip Pittman's The Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi* (Cleveland, 1906), 58; Peter Joseph Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile* (2d. ed.; Boston, 1910); Dunbar Rowland (ed.), *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1763-1766, English Dominion I* (Nashville, 1911), 7-17; Great Britain, Public Record Office, Colonial Office, Class 5:574, George Johnstone to the Board of Trade, Pensacola, October 31, 1764; cited hereafter as C.O.

³John Knox Laughton, "George Johnstone," *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Sidney Lee (London, 1908), X, 963-965.

⁴George Johnstone to the Board of Trade, Pensacola, February 20, 1765, C.O. 5:583.

regular army,⁵ recruitment of French, Swiss, and German settlers from the west bank of the Mississippi,⁶ and the encouragement of British immigration into the colony.⁷ One interesting British group which migrated into the new province of West Florida was the Scots. Contemporary Scotland was the scene of economic and social unrest, and many of her sons took the opportunity to brave the wilds of the North American frontier business community to build their lives and enhance their fortunes.⁸ The eminent historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr. has noted that so many Scots sought out places as representatives of large mercantile firms, the word Scot became synonymous with factor.⁹ Schlesinger's is not isolated testimony. Even a cursory perusal of primary materials covering this period of the colony's history bears witness to the validity of his statement. Names such as McGillivray, McIntosh, Graham, Bruce, Fitzpatrick, Ross, Dunbar, Struthers, Stephenson, and Strachan fill the letter books, bills of lading, delegations of the power of attorney, and other primary materials which describe the activities of contemporary commerce during the period of British rule in West Florida. These Scots were hard-working, tight-fisted entrepreneurs whose business was money-making, and they exhibited shrewd, honest, but quite demanding traits in the pursuit of their respective businesses.¹⁰

The purpose of this study is to examine the American sojourn of one of these Scots in order to illustrate the trials and tribulations which beset a merchant on the West Florida frontier. Charles Strachan, a native of Kinnabec near Montrose in

⁵References of Petitions for Land from the Principals involved to the Board of Trade, London, various dates, C.O. 5:576.

⁶Johnson, **British West Florida**, 35; George Johnstone to the Duke of Halifax, Pensacola, May 4, 1765, C.O. 5:574; J. H. Deiler, "Settlement of the German Coast of Louisiana, and the Creoles of German Descent," **German American Annals**, XI (1909), 34-63, 67-102.

⁷General State of the Province Message from George Johnstone to John Pownall, Mobile, February 19, 1765, C.O. 5:574; Rowland, **Mississippi Provincial Archives, English Dominion I**, 271-273.

⁸Ian Charles Cargill Graham, **Colonists from Scotland** (Ithaca 1956), 23-89.

⁹Arthur Meier Schlesinger, **The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution** (New York, 1918), 35.

¹⁰**Pinkney's Virginia Gazette**, March 23, 1775; Graham, **Colonists from Scotland**; 117-119.

Scotland, spent five years of what he termed the "best part" of his life engaged in the frontier trade.¹¹ He came to Savannah, Georgia, in the latter part of 1763, where he was employed as a member of the mercantile firm of Johnson and Wylly. After a short apprenticeship, the company allowed him the opportunity to become a factor representing their enterprise in Mobile. Based on extant primary sources, it would appear that no restrictions were placed upon his personal activities because the Scot subsequently formed his own company in Mobile while continuing to act as the agent of Johnson and Wylly.

Strachan departed for Mobile about January 1, 1764, on board the English sloop, *Adventure*, under the command of Captain Robert Stapleton. Aboard he supervised a quantity of goods placed under his authority by Johnson and Wylly which were to be sold or bartered to traders. Because of a stormy passage of eleven weeks, during which time the vessel was almost lost, the Captain was forced southward to the port of New Providence in the Bahamas.¹² After the weather cleared and the goods were checked to determine if there was any appreciable damage, the voyage to West Florida was resumed. When the vessel docked in Pensacola, Strachan proceeded overland to Mobile via the Creek nation. Why he did this is a matter for conjecture. It may be that he was weary of the sea voyage or it is quite possible that he may have desired to inform potential business connections of the new Johnson and Wylly operation in Mobile. Whatever the reason, Strachan arrived in Mobile in time to help land the cargo which was mostly ruined or spoiled due to the aforementioned problems of a tempestuous voyage. After a survey of the damage was made, Strachan decided to sell the goods at public auction or vendue, which was the common practice in the colony. Damaged goods, or those not in great demand, often met this fate when merchants deemed it necessary to make room for a stock of marketable merchandise. The goods in question were simply turned over to a vendue master who sold them on a specified day at the highest price offered.¹³

¹¹Letterbook of Charles Strachan, ms. 720, National Library of Scotland.

¹²Strachan to John Beswicke and Company of London, Mobile, May 14, 1764, *Ibid*.

¹³Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, May 10, 1764, *ibid*.

Charles Strachan was disappointed to find that there were few traders in Mobile. He soon discovered, however, that the local Indians had been in town recently where they attended a congress jointly sponsored by the ranking French official, Governor Jean Jacques D'Abbadie, and the new English military commander for Mobile, Major Robert Farmar. As a result of these time consuming harangues, no hunts had been made and the traders of the interior were unable to procure a goodly supply of skins and furs from the Indians.¹⁴ Strachan made reconnoiter by sending two local traders, Joe Wright and John McIntosh, into the interior to investigate the situation, but his emissaries found that active Pensacola traders had already bought and bartered for the few skins available. With this disheartening news, Johnson and Wyll's Mobile agent notified his superiors that no commerce would develop in Mobile before September.¹⁵

Having little to do, Strachan decided to locate and purchase a house. He looked about and made several inquiries before settling on a small house with four rooms and a separate kitchen situated on a double lot. Mobile's newest resident purchased the house for three hundred and fifty dollars, but was later disturbed when an associate confided that he had paid too dearly for the property. True to his Scottish sense of value, however, Strachan rationalized that his was the only tolerable house for sale which possessed the advantage of proximity to his work.¹⁶ After moving into his new residence, the grim Scotsman began to learn all he could of the state of local affairs. Considerable inquiries caused Strachan to judge that, at least temporarily, trading prospects were not bright. He noted, as countless others had and would, that the lands about the city were barren, and even several miles north, were only tolerably productive.¹⁷ The population was sparse; a trading enterprise would founder

¹⁴John R. Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Ann Arbor, 1944), 195.

¹⁵Strachan to Johnson and Wyll, Mobile, May 10, 1764, letterbook.

¹⁶*Ibid*

¹⁷Andrew Burnaby, *Travels through the Middle Settlements in North America in the Years 1759 and 1760* (3rd. ed. rev.; London, 1812), 751; William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, and West Florida* (Philadelphia, 1791), 404; Bossu, *Travels*, 221.

without an adequate number of residents to support it. But Strachan did think that Mobile was well situated on two navigable rivers, the Tombigbee and the Alabama, to receive the trade of the Choctaw and the Chickasaw nations. And when rumors were circulated that New Orleans was to become a Spanish possession, the new merchant rejoiced because the lately vanquished would no longer be in power in that city to incite the Indians against the British.¹⁸

Strachan, nevertheless, declared to his superiors that he would order no goods until the prospects of trade were better. It seemed that the only hope for developing an extensive commerce lay in the possibility of the Spanish allowing New Orleans to engage in free trade with the colony. Since the Treaty of 1763 recognized the British right of free navigation on the Mississippi, there seemed to be justification for thinking that trade there would eventually materialize.¹⁹

When the vendue master succeeded in selling the damaged cargo, Strachan experienced his first conflict with Farmer's forces in Mobile. They demanded that he present the sales receipts to military headquarters for inspection before being forwarded to the home office of Johnson and Wylly in Savannah. The Scotsman expressed considerable irritation at this action because to his mind the act slowed the channels of commercial intercourse and relegated them to a position subordinate to military affairs. Strachan never changed his mind about the high-handed, arbitrary attitude of the West Florida military because they seemed to discourage trade at every turn; it is not unlikely that his opinion represented the feelings of the citizens and merchants of Mobile when he expressed the hope that a civil governor would arrive shortly to place matters on a more equitable footing between the merchants and the military authorities.²⁰

¹⁸Strachan to John Beswicke and Company of London, Mobile, May 14, 1764, letterbook.

¹⁹Thomas Hutchins, *An Historical Narrative of Topographical Description of Louisiana and West Florida* (Philadelphia, 1784), 1, Howard, *British Development of West Florida*, 18.

²⁰Strachan to John Beswicke and Company of London, Mobile, May 14, 1764, letterbook.

Time seemed to drag slowly in colonial Mobile for the ambitious, but yet somewhat disappointed, Strachan. The early summer months of 1764 were hot and monotonous being broken only with the fearful news of sporadic smallpox epidemics which allegedly decimated undetermined segments of the Indian population in neighboring environs.²¹ Strachan and other residents of the nascent village expressed considerable joy during the latter part of June when news reached them that a Spanish vessel laden with gold and silver bullion and the desired goods of Latin America had appeared off Pensacola. It seemed to the Mobile settlers that the rich trade to the South was finally to break wide open. The euphoria was not long to endure, however, for British naval officers, acting under the letter of the newly revitalized mercantilistic legislation, seized the ship and towed her from Pensacola harbor without allowing discharge of goods or intercourse between the Spanish and the English. Hearing about the orthodox British position, Strachan glumly commented:

. . . it is my opinion that had they met with no interruption there might have been a great deal of business done in that way. Why they discourage a trade that consumes such a quantity of our manufactures and brings us cash in return is more than I can imagine.²²

The Scotsman became more depressed as time elapsed and the inland trade proved to be of little consequence. With affairs already bad, Strachan contracted a painful condition which he described as the "dry Gripes" and had to take to bed, quitting work for nearly three months. He was up and around, though in a weakened condition, by October and he took heart upon learning that Governor George Johnstone was daily expected in Pensacola.²³ The convalescing merchant resolved not to leave Mobile without making a renewed attempt, for he and his peers felt that the Governor would end the military blockade imposed upon the Spanish trade by the military.²⁴ As a matter of fact,

²¹Rowland, *Mississippi Provincial Archives, English Dominion I*, 123.

²²Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, June 27, 1764, letterbook.

²³Robert Farmar to the Board of Trade, Mobile, June 30, 1764, C.O. 5:574.

²⁴Rowland, *Mississippi Provincial Archives, English Dominion I*, 279-280.

Strachan had anticipated the Governor's action by ordering a token amount of goods which he felt would be of interest on the Spanish market.²⁵ A news leak hinted that Spanish troops had arrived in New Orleans and Strachan ever hopeful for a break in the mercantilistic policy, determined to be among the first to make a push "where there may [be] an opening."²⁶

Economic opportunity, however, remained stagnant in Mobile. The Governor was having no luck with his program to implement the Spanish trade, and food was increasingly hard to purchase in town. Even the bad beef on which citizens had subsisted throughout the hot summer was now in short supply. Many local merchants grew despondent, and seeing no chance for success, left the province. Strachan complained to friends, "we are all starving here" and asked Johnson and Wylly to send some meat if at all possible.²⁷ His health, already threatened, became so bad that by the end of November, 1764, he could not muster the strength to write to his friends and business correspondents.²⁸ Strachan decided to make a trip to New Orleans where he might rest and possibly engage in some business if his health improved. In that city he spent several weeks in January, 1765, while making business acquaintances and taking orders for British manufactured goods.²⁹ The illegal business with New Orleans evidently became brisk, for Strachan reported selling 1,000 pounds sterling worth of linens, osnaburgs, and strouds. As a matter of fact, he sold more goods than he had in stock and was forced to give half his sale to Robert Crooke and Company of Mobile so that the rest of the New Orleans order might be filled.³⁰ The principal New Orleans purchaser was a certain Monsieur Petit whom Strachan regarded as "one of the surest men in New Orleans."³¹ The French merchant bought

²⁵Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, November 2, 1764, letter-book.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, November 10, 1764, *ibid.*

²⁸Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, November 27, 1764, *ibid.*

²⁹Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, February 18, 1765, *ibid.*

³⁰Strachan to Monsieur [possibly Joseph] Petit of New Orleans, Mobile, February 12, 1765, *ibid.*

³¹Although the references are brief, on the basis of Strachan's correspondence with West Florida peers, the Scot seemed to be greatly impressed with Petit's character and honesty.

glasses, calicos, chintzes, handkerchiefs, printed linens and strouds. Business activity was on the upsurge, even if illegal. In February, Strachan sold most of his saleable items on hand. He was very much elated, but remained cautious and refused to plunge headlong into the ordering of goods which might not sell. Rumors continued to persist that when Spain officially occupied New Orleans a voluminous commerce would ensue between Louisiana and West Florida. Governor Johnstone went on record by assuring the merchants that the token Spanish trade with New Orleans would be considerably augmented in the near future.³² Although Strachan made no direct mention of it in his correspondence, there is strong implication that the peltry and skin trade with New Orleans had begun to improve.³³

Events seemed to be moving so well that Strachan asked Johnson and Wylly to order an entirely new stock from their London supplier, John Beswicke and Company. But in March, 1765, conditions began to deteriorate. Strachan's health grew bad once more and he became so weakened that he asked Johnson and Wylly to countermand his requisition to the London firm; his reason was quite simple.

. . . I am afraid this country will not do for me and I would not choose to be engaged with a new cargo which it will be a considerable time before we could get rid of until I see if I am likely to keep my health better for the future than I have done hitherto . . . as there is no consideration [that] would induce me to suffer so much as I have done since the first [of] July last.³⁴

But Strachan's health was not the whole story. In November, 1764, he had remarked to acquaintances that it would be weak to leave a place in which there were "tolerable prospects from the Spanish trade,"³⁵ and as late as February, 1765, had said that he wanted to be certain there were no chances of success before departing.

³²Johnstone to the Board of Trade, Pensacola, February 19, 1765, C.O. 5:574.

³³Francois-Xavier Martin, *The History of Louisiana from the Earliest Period* (New Orleans, 1827), I, 345-346.

³⁴Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, March 27, 1765, letterbook.

³⁵Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, November 2, 1764, *ibid.*

It seems, from extant correspondence, that by March the merchant was convinced that profitable trade was not going to develop with Spanish America because the Spanish had not shown up, as previously was rumored, to occupy New Orleans. He rationalized that it would be easy to order goods at a later date if the Spanish did appear in the Crescent City. At this point Strachan reflects the appearance of a dejected and sick man who wanted desperately to prosper, but to whom no avenue of hope seemed open. This condition grew worse with the passing days and he reported in May, 1765, that in his opinion Mobile would soon be nothing but a military post.³⁶

The scarcity of fresh meat and vegetables plagued the starving inhabitants of Mobile.³⁷ Strachan again became so ill that he could not work. He did accept a small shipment of marketable goods in April, 1765, from Johnson and Wylly; However, upon examination of the merchandise, it was found to be so rotten and motheaten that most of the items had to be returned to Savannah. In a letter to Strachan, Johnson and Wylly expressed concern over the health of their Mobile representative and offered to send help, but Strachan assured his superiors that in spite of his poor physical condition he could handle ten times the amount of business available in Mobile.³⁸

At the end of his first twelve months travail in this frontier outpost, Strachan had made a net gain of sixteen hundred dollars. This figure even includes the loss of five hundred and fifty dollars suffered because of damaged goods which had to be sold at public auction shortly after his arrival.³⁹ In spite of sickness, hunger, bad weather, loneliness, and Indian problems the Scot had made considerable economic gain which goaded him to greater personal efforts in making an individual success of his venture at colonial Mobile.

During the spring of 1766, Strachan enjoyed better health and decided to resume commercial activities. He became disap-

³⁶Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, May 9, 1765, *ibid.*

³⁷Rowland, *Mississippi Provincial Archives, English Dominion I*, 14-17, 31; Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, Chapter XXV.

³⁸Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, April 12, 1765, letterbook.

³⁹Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, May 9, 1765, *ibid.*

pointed, however, during the course of his renewed efforts. Two episodes in particular illustrate the difficulties of frontier finance as encountered by Strachan. They will be offered here in some detail because of their representative features which seem to have characterized and complicated the problems of Strachan and other merchants in West Florida. The first episode was occasioned when the Scot received a letter and power of attorney from Arthur Gordon, merchant and lawyer in Pensacola, who was then serving in the official capacity of provincial Advocate-General.⁴⁰ Gordon asked Strachan to look for a certain Captain Ralph Wardlaw while he was in New Orleans. Wardlaw allegedly owed money to the Georgia mercantile firm of Dunbar, Young, and Simpson. The story received by Strachan was that Wardlaw was trying to escape payment of a debt to the company by sneaking out of West Florida into New Orleans with ultimate plans of going to Jamaica. Gordon's letter claimed that he had not sufficient time to get a deposition to the Captain's bond; therefore, he had not been able to arrest him in Pensacola. Strachan expressed irritation that Gordon should call upon him for such aid. He judged that the Advocate-General had been neglectful and tardy in not arresting Wardlaw in Pensacola. Strachan was acutely aware, however, that he might need to confer the power of attorney on peers in Pensacola to collect bad debts there, and did not want people in the capital city to feel that he was unco-operative. Strachan, accordingly, left for New Orleans to stop Wardlaw but entertained no illusions of being able to detain the Captain without a deposition. He was able to find Wardlaw in the Crescent City, however, and there explained the nature of his mission. One might imagine that the Captain was rather reluctant to discuss the matter, but Strachan persisted until the seaman agreed to tender a bill of sale for alleged personal property at Pensacola in lieu of the debt.⁴¹

Strachan was happy to get this much; and even when he heard later that Wardlaw had already sold his Pensacola property, the Scot felt he had carried out the instructions of the pro-

⁴⁰George Johnstone to Sir John Pownall, Pensacola, February 19, 1765, C.O. 5:575.

⁴¹Strachan to Arthur Gordon, Mobile, May 10, 1765, letterbook.

vincial Advocate-General.⁴² This affair reveals the fact that merchants and other participants in colonial trade had a tremendous problem in the collection of outstanding debts. If a debtor refused to honor his obligation on the date due, the creditor, as was a common response, might confer the power of attorney on a friend better able to collect the money. This practice, however, was complicated by problems of time, weather, transportation, and costs; and it was not unusual for bills to remain outstanding for years.

The role of Charles Strachan acting as a collector of debts illustrates the complications of the problem and enlists the reader's understanding. For example, in the Wardlaw affair, Strachan gave the Captain's power of attorney and the bill of sale for a lot and house at Pensacola to Thomas Hardy, a merchant who resided in the city.⁴³ This situation was stretched out for years and was marked by a series of letters which passed between Strachan and Hardy; Strachan and Dunbar, Young, and Simpson; and Strachan and the Advocate-General. Because of the depressed state of colonial finances, it was November, 1767, before Hardy was able to clear up the matter and even then only a portion of Wardlaw's alleged debt was wiped out. The last note of the affair which we have from Strachan's letters is a message from Strachan to Dunbar, Young, and Simpson in which the former explained that Captain Wardlaw was at Dauphin Island in the Gulf of Mexico, but hourly expected in Mobile.⁴⁴ The matter was never mentioned again as far as the extant correspondence indicates.

A second complicated episode which illustrates the vagaries of West Florida finance was Strachan's business with the same company, Dunbar, Young, and Simpson, involving their purchase of the schooner, *Charming Nancy*, from a certain Captain Samuel Bennyworth. The Captain owed money to the firm and gave a bill of sale for his schooner as security on the debt. He also allowed the register of the vessel to be transferred from his name to theirs. Bennyworth, however, remained in charge,

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³Strachan to Thomas Hardy, Mobile, May 21, 1766, *ibid.*

⁴⁴Strachan to Dunbar, Young, and Simpson, Mobile, November 28, 1767, *ibid.*

going as master of the vessel to West Florida. Once there, he sold her as his own to a Captain James Ross, who got a new registration from James Bruce, Collector of Customs at Pensacola, and renamed the vessel, *King of Prussia*. The Savannah firm was apprised of the complicated affair and extended their power of attorney to Charles Strachan who was visiting in that city in January, 1766. The company officials asked the Scot to seize the schooner and on his return to Mobile via Pensacola, Strachan stopped to confer with Bruce who showed him the original register in the name of Dunbar, Young, and Simpson. Pressing business responsibilities, however, occasioned Strachan's return to Mobile, but he sent his power of attorney to Thomas Hardy in Pensacola to acquaint the latter party with the available facts of the case and requested Hardy to get a copy of the original registration.⁴⁵ Strachan subsequently wrote to Bennyworth in Pensacola and asked him to meet with Hardy and explain his actions. The problem at hand apparently had one of two solutions. If there was no authority for the sale to Ross, then Dunbar, Young, and Simpson should be considered the legal owners, and Bruce was at fault for altering the property in question by granting a new registration to Captain Ross. If, on the other hand, there was some undisclosed agreement between the company and Bennyworth, then the latter could elect to seek out Hardy and explain the intricacies of the matter.⁴⁶

Acting upon the advice of Strachan and having the necessary power of attorney, Hardy interceded to stop the *King of Prussia's* exit from the port of Pensacola. Captain Ross became furious because he had a cargo loaded and ready to set sail for Jamaica. Strachan was informed of the complications, and posted a letter to Hardy which indicated that the schooner would be allowed to leave provided Bennyworth put up the necessary security for the vessel. Vouching that he was the true owner when the vessel was sold to Ross, Bennyworth claimed there were mitigating circumstances and that Dunbar, Young, and Simpson had not explained the entire nature of the original transaction. Strachan wearied of the matter as time elapsed and

⁴⁵Strachan to Thomas Hardy, Mobile, May 10, 1766, *ibid.*

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

the business became more complicated; he began to suspect that there were numerous factors being omitted from the case. In an attempt to clear up the situation, Strachan wrote the Savannah merchants requesting a full and unfettered account of the entire sales transaction. Bennyworth, meanwhile, complained that he had agreed with Dunbar, Young, and Simpson to do with the vessel as he saw fit.⁴⁷ Close examination of the papers received from Savannah convinced Strachan of Bennyworth's good intentions, and he sympathetically instructed the Captain to write the company and point out the legality of his actions on the basis of the original agreement. Fate intervened, however, and on the afternoon of May 21, 1766, before the message could be sent, Strachan received orders from the alleged Savannah owners to sell the schooner at public auction for whatever amount of cash she might bring. This message was relayed to Hardy in Pensacola who promptly made preparations for the sale.⁴⁸

A group of merchants in Mobile heard about the impending sale of the vessel and asked Strachan if they might purchase her. He was more than happy to oblige when they guaranteed to pay more than the *King of Prussia* would bring at a public sale. Once again, in this comedy of errors, it was too late; Hardy had already completed the sale in Pensacola on June 24, 1766. Arriving there a few days later, Strachan found that it would be very difficult to recover the vessel legally. The price received, however, did not cover Bennyworth's alleged indebtedness to Dunbar, Young, and Simpson but the Captain placidly agreed to transfer the ownership of a slave plus a house and lot in Pensacola for the balance due the Georgia merchants. Strachan inspected the schooner and cheerfully reported that it was old and weather-beaten, but the real estate and Negro were worth upwards of eight hundred dollars. No longer trusting the ethics of the Georgia firm, the Scot requested that they send him a full statement of Bennyworth's account signed under the testimonial of a local resident so that the entire business might be terminated.⁴⁹ Dunbar, Young, and Simpson, however, were dilatory and had not replied by January 7, 1767, when Strachan re-

⁴⁷Strachan to Thomas Hardy, Mobile, May 21, 1766, *ibid.*

⁴⁸Strachan to Thomas Hardy, Mobile, May 22, 1766, *ibid.*

⁴⁹Strachan to Dunbar, Young, and Simpson, Mobile, June 24, 1766, *ibid.*

peated his request. Again, they did not reply to inquiry; subsequent requests met the same fate and the affair dragged along until Bennyworth died in June, 1768. By that time Strachan had become so exasperated with the entire matter that he complained ". . . it is very surprising that if he owes you anything you should not before now have furnished me with the means of recovering it for you by transmitting me proper account."⁵⁰

It is evident from these examples that debt collection was one of the most time-consuming and tedious problems of trade and commerce in West Florida. No merchant or factor liked the task, but equally apparent is the fact that it was necessary to offer this reciprocal courtesy if the merchants were going to survive in business. No matter how much one might complain, he knew that time and circumstance would inevitably put him in the position of having to press a customer or business peer for debts so that he might continue. Charles Strachan provides us with an excellent example of such activity. He wrote to Dunbar, Young, and Simpson that their business required more of his time than his own affairs. He cursed the *King of Prussia* as that "damned schooner" which vexed him more than anything in his life heretofore.⁵¹ But he carried out the work of collection to the utmost of his ability because Strachan felt that eventually he would be in the same position with respect to a future debtor.

Collecting debts was one thing. Stirring up business remained quite another. All through the year 1766, the merchants of West Florida held their collective breaths while Governor Johnstone fought for their desire to trade freely with the Spanish colonies. As a result of countless letters, memorials to the Parliament, and demands that West Florida was on the verge of stagnation, the Parliament appeared to heed the governor's admonitions.⁵² Actually, Great Britain merely suspended part of her mercantilistic program because of British merchant demands that they were losing profits as a result of colonial non-importation agreements invoked against the Stamp Act 774

⁵⁰Strachan to Dunbar, Young, and Simpson, Mobile, July 21, 1768, *ibid.*

⁵¹Strachan to William Telfair of Georgia, Mobile, June 24, 1766, *ibid.*

⁵²Howard, *British Development of West Florida*, 41.

along the Atlantic seaboard. External trade did not develop for West Florida and money grew more and more scarce in the province.⁵³

Ironically, at this juncture Strachan was enjoying better health than he had in years.⁵⁴ The political and economic conditions of the colony, however, began to sag. A struggle between Governor Johnstone and the military commanders over the status of free trade with the Spanish colonies was beginning to rupture the colony into civil and military factions; stability was ebbing away. Strachan had hoped that Johnstone would be able to solve the complex problems of the province, but had accurately regarded his fellow countryman as a person "too hot" for the colony.⁵⁵ It was also in 1766 that the New Orleans trade was blocked. The Spanish governor there, Don Antonio de Ulloa, in a flourish of Latin geniality, had issued a statement to Governor Johnstone which expressed his desire for friendship and amity; and even sent his personal secretary, Don Antonio Manuel Felix Reisch, on a journey of state to greet Johnstone and convey to him expressions of Spanish good-will. West Florida's chief executive was initially impressed and reciprocated by sending his envoy to New Orleans. It was, however, not very long before Johnstone received reports that Ulloa was inspecting every part of Louisiana "as narrowly as a Jew does his Purse" and was apprehensive of the latter's real intentions.⁵⁶ Strachan made no mention of these events to friends in his correspondence, but he was well informed of contemporary political affairs because of a trip to New Orleans in May, 1766. He knew that local French residents hated Ulloa, and the Spanish forces in western Louisiana were being deployed to fortify Spanish defenses because they feared British entry into the colony from West Florida bases.⁵⁷

⁵³George Johnstone to Sir John Pownall, Pensacola, October 23, 1766, C.O. 5:575.

⁵⁴Strachan to William Telfair of Georgia, Mobile, October 24, 1766, letterbook.

⁵⁵Howard, **British Development of West Florida**, 22-25.

⁵⁶George Johnstone to Sir John Pownall, Pensacola, July 19, 1766, C.O. 5:575.

⁵⁷Charles Gayarre, **History of Louisiana** (New Orleans, 1903), II, 133-135.

Strachan first mentioned trouble between French and Spanish inhabitants of New Orleans during January, 1767, when he related to a friend the story of quarrels and arguments going on there. But he felt, at the same time, that the Spanish would chase out the French, allow a larger Spanish population to come in, engage in free trade with West Florida, and bolster the over-all economy. Mobile would, in the wake of such a policy, profit with higher prices and more diversity of goods.⁵⁸ However, the struggle for control of New Orleans between entrenched French merchants and Spanish soldiers proved to be a long and drawn out affair. At first irked, Strachan became increasingly disillusioned, and returned to minor trading activities within the province. The last piece of commercial correspondence between Strachan and the New Orleans merchants is dated April 8, 1767, and he subsequently advised friends in West Florida that they would never recover any outstanding debts from the Crescent City.⁵⁹

Trade continued to be dull in Mobile, with goods simply rotting on the shelves. Strachan discouraged acquaintances from sending any items to Mobile except supplies for local consumption. He reported that grain was so scarce the poultry was dying, and even asked a Savannah correspondent to send fifty bushels of Indian corn if at all possible.⁶⁰ Evidently he did not receive the grain because there is record of repeated requests for it. Nothing seemed to change except hotter weather which added more strain throughout the summer of 1767, a condition which prompted the Scotsman to write ". . . this place is if possible becoming worse daily. It is said that the two regiments [British] here are to be removed and only two companies are to remain in the province."⁶¹

Charles Strachan was not the only merchant at Mobile to predict a bleak future for the commerce of West Florida. His friend and fellow merchant, William Telfair, had entered into a partnership with John Dunbar, but by the latter part of 1764

⁵⁸Strachan to William Telfair, Mobile, January 7, 1767, letterbook.

⁵⁹Strachan to William Telfair, Mobile, May 7, 1767, *ibid.*

⁶⁰Strachan to William Morgan of Savannah, Mobile, May 8, 1767, *ibid.*

⁶¹Strachan to William Telfair, Mobile, July 4, 1767, *ibid.*

decided to leave the city and return to another of his business enterprises in Georgia. Strachan had been perceptive enough, even at that early date, to applaud the decision as being that of a very sensible man.

... I should think it the greatest folly in nature for a man who has got to a tolerable business in an agreeable healthy place to give it up for a precarious trade in I am certain the most disagreeable and unhealthy place in America.⁶²

Upon leaving Mobile, Telfair gave his friend a power of attorney to collect outstanding debts and take care of his personal affairs. Strachan tried to make these collections throughout his entire stay in Mobile. There was some initial progress, but as the economic depression became worse, fewer debts were collected. Affairs were so bad by 1766 that Strachan confessed to Telfair, "Most of the people have already and the rest are preparing to quit Mobile as soon as possible so that in a short time, I expect it to be entirely deserted."⁶³ Nor were any debts collected in 1767, and Strachan's report to Telfair was dismal.

... with regard to your other affairs here I can do very little in them, the houses will fetch very little at present nor will anyone rent them. Bruce is gone home on Charity I myself lost about 70 dollars by him Mills and LeConte there is not a farthing to be got from. I have again sent their notes to Orleans to endeavour to be recover'd but, I'm afraid without Effect. Lysetts Bill has never been heard of & there has been several Judgments out against Carr these months & nothing found to satisfy them⁶⁴

Business remained in this depressed condition well into 1768. To make matters worse, Strachan became quite ill with his old malady and remained sick from November, 1767, until July, 1768, when he decided that he would endure the hardships no longer and resolved to return to a permanent residence in Savannah.⁶⁵

⁶²Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, November 2, 1767, *ibid.*

⁶³Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, November 5, 1767, *ibid.*

⁶⁴Strachan to William Telfair, Mobile, November 28, 1767, *ibid.*

⁶⁵Strachan to John McIntosh of Natchez, Mobile, June 20, 1768, *ibid.*

As Strachan formulated these plans, he received a message from Scotland which bore the news of his grand-father's death there. Strachan had been named the beneficiary of an estate at Kinnabec near Montrose, and this legacy appeared as a gift from heaven for the unhappy, sick, and apparently luckless Scot. He made immediate plans to return, gave his power of attorney to Daniel Ward and Company of Mobile, and notified peers and correspondents of his intentions to return home.⁶⁶

Because of complications in travel, Strachan did not arrive in Scotland until January, 1769, where he found that he had not been freed from the spectre of complicated provincial business. It seems that in January, 1767, he had, with Peter Swanson of Mobile, been appointed as a joint executor in the estate of William Pope. John McNab and William Pope had a partnership in Mobile but were in indigent circumstances until the latter had been employed by the military in West Florida to send a detachment of troops into the interior on a mission of reconnaissance. Eager to make a profit, Pope engaged himself for the payment of all the expenses to get the job.⁶⁷ He then charged the "commanding officer commissary" about fifteen hundred dollars for the cost of the trip. These charges were refused by the officer because they were deemed excessive. Pope, however, died before any understanding could be reached and the matter fell on the shoulders of the executors of his estate, Strachan and Swanson. They decided to sue for the money; they were successful in recovering it, but the expenses involved were heavy. During the course of the investigations it was ascertained that Pope had not paid many people who went on the expedition and the executors had no recourse other than to pay these authenticated claims out of the estate funds.⁶⁸

Alexander Pope, the father of the decedent and a clergyman of Caithness, Scotland wrote to Strachan accusing him of having done injustice in his role as co-executor of the estate. Strachan reacted to the accusation by inquiring of the father

⁶⁶Strachan to Johnson and Wylly, Mobile, July 28, 1768; Strachan to George Ancrum of the Carolinas, Mobile, July 23, 1768, *ibid*.

⁶⁷Charles Fullertown to Alexander Pope of Caithness, Scotland, Kinnabec, Scotland, January 6, 1769, letterbook.

⁶⁸*Ibid*.

on what grounds he felt that the estate had been cheated. He further demanded that if there was news from West Florida which accused him of dishonestly, then the elder Pope's informants were simply liars.⁶⁰ The minister complained for awhile, but as far as the correspondence indicates, never attempted to make legal issue of the matter.

Charles Strachan failed as a businessman in the New World, but he had returned to his home where he intended to spend his remaining days. Analysis of his brief career as a West Florida merchant and trader reveals several significant pieces of evidence regarding the reasons for his failure to establish a profitable business, and perhaps more significantly, why West Florida failed. Very important is the fact that the desired, if illegal, trade with Spanish America never opened. There was a lack of money in the colony which prevented even the internal commerce from becoming spirited. Merchant after merchant pulled out of Mobile to return to South Carolina, Georgia, New England, or Europe because of the unfavorably climate which, incidentally, was held to be the primary reason for poor health in West Florida. The New Orleans trade never materialized because the Spanish were fearful of cooperation lest they arouse the wrath of the mother country. Strachan's example, though admittedly isolated, reveals the harsh conditions encountered in frontier life, the lack of necessary profits which might have provided some incentive, and the unending pursuit of creditor after debtor. The commerce of West Florida by 1768 was, indeed, in the doldrums.

⁶⁰Ibid.

ECONOMICS AND POLITICS IN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ALABAMA

by Durwood Long

Alabama politics in the presidential election of 1860 was a vigorous contest among three factions. The Southern Rights men and their former opposition, the Southern Rights Opposition, uncomfortably in alliance, supported John C. Breckinridge, the nominee of the Southern Democrats. A small group of Southern Democrats promoted the candidacy of Stephen A. Douglas as the Democratic nominee with the best chance of winning the election. The old line Whigs made a rather valiant effort to secure votes for John Bell, the Constitutional Union standard bearer.

The results of the election in November gave Breckinridge a clear majority. Forty-two counties cast pluralities for Breckinridge; thirty of them gave majorities. Bell and Douglas received pluralities in five counties each, majorities in two counties each. By the county count it appears that the voters overwhelmingly endorsed Breckinridge and his platform. Yet Breckinridge's total votes were 49,019 compared to 41,484 for Bell and Douglas. Almost half of these voting in the election in Alabama voted for a candidate other than Breckinridge. Why? Was it economics or politics which set the pattern? It is apparent from the facts given above that there must have been a higher concentration of population in the areas giving Bell and Douglas majorities. Is this significant? This paper is an analysis of select representative counties in an attempt to determine the relationship between economic interest groups and political action in Alabama in the significant presidential election of 1860.

Many explanations of why the Alabama voters cast their ballots as they did have been offered. Some historians have suggested that the possession of party machinery by a particular faction in an area was the crucial determining factor. Unfortunately, exact definitions of party machinery are not given in this interpretation, and are left to the imagination of the reader. Denman, for example, attributes the Breckinridge vic-

tory to his possession of the regular party machinery.¹ The unanswered question is what constituted party machinery in Alabama in 1860?

Another favorite interpretation states that the vote reflected conflicting economic groups. To examine this view adequately a study of economic groups in Alabama in 1860 must be made. Still another suggested explanation is the thesis that the vote reflected differing political philosophies. According to this premise, the north-south Alabama cleavage is explained by asserting that the northern section held to the tenets of Jacksonian Democracy while the southern section advocated a kind of Calhoun Democracy. The Jacksonians were characterized as small farmers, anti-bank, favoring free land and favoring the liberal capitalist, laissez-faire policies of a national government. The followers of Calhoun have been described as large planters advocating overseas expansion (Cuba), limited western expansion, pro-bank, mercantile-agrarian aristocracy with a sectional nationalism or states-rights view. Actually the Whigs in the Black Belt were a split from this group, differing mainly in political loyalties and in their greater devotion to nationalism. The Whigs in the Black Belt and a few cities followed Clay and his political policies. An interpretation closely associated with this one maintains that historic and economic sectionalism determined the vote in 1860. According to this view, north Alabama traditionally supported Jacksonian policies while south Alabama historically advocated Calhoun doctrines within the Democratic party. Also related to the latter is the idea of the political loyalty of the voter, regardless of economic interest. The explanation that in 1860 the Constitutional Union (Bell) vote reflects old Whig strength and that the Democratic vote was split between Douglas and Breckinridge is the practical application of this idea to the election.

A study of the Alabama counties will serve to determine the validity of these ideas and their practical application. The Douglas counties will be examined first. Of the five counties

¹Clarence Phillip Denman, *The Secession Movement in Alabama*, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86. (Montgomery Alabama State Department of Archives and History, 1933), pp. 85-86.

which gave Stephen A. Douglas a plurality, four of these, Lawrence, Madison, Lauderdale, and Marshall, were north Alabama counties, all bordering on the Tennessee River. The fifth was Mobile in the extreme south, on the Gulf of Mexico. The counties in which Douglas ran second were Walker, Morgan, St. Clair, Jackson, Blount, Autauga, and Coosa. The first five were in north Alabama also, but the last two named were in the central part of the state. The location of these counties seems to suggest a sectional vote. Nine out of the twelve were in north Alabama. To explain sectionalism, however, is perhaps more important than to denote it. Why was there sectionalism? Did economic interest groups vote as blocs? Did a commonness of demographic origin determine the views of the voters? Was political consistency present because of the first or the latter? To dismiss the question by answering simply "sectionalism" is superficial unless the causes of such sectionalism be explained. Even sectionalism does not explain the reasons for the Douglas vote in Mobile, Autauga, and Coosa counties. Neither does it explain why no more of the north Alabama counties gave Douglas a plurality.

The explanation by sectionalism is in itself insufficient and unsatisfactory. It is tenable only when bolstered by almost as many exceptions as illustrations or when amended by corollary. The explanation that people having origins in Tennessee, North Carolina, or Virginia would most likely vote either for Douglas or Bell and those from Georgia and South Carolina would give Breckinridge the vote is also unsatisfactory. This would ignore other vital factors such as economic interests and the possibility of change in political views. The element of change cannot be ignored in a fluid and frontier society such as Alabama in 1860. If, however, the thesis of demographic origin is valid, how does it square with the fact that Mobile in the South was populated by people from Georgia and South Carolina more than from Virginia, North Carolina, or Tennessee but gave Breckinridge a definite minority? On the other hand, why did Breckinridge carry many of the north Alabama counties populated by people having origins in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia?²

²Either these voters did not imagine secession as an issue or they did not regard Breckinridge as advocating such a course.

Like the demographic and sectional explanations, the thesis of historical party loyalty, in itself, is incomplete. When the latter is applied to the Douglas vote and the vote of the north Alabama counties it is found unsatisfactory, for it only partially explains the outcome. Historically, north Alabama was the stronghold of Jacksonian democracy. Why did not more of the counties in that area give Douglas the nod as the heir of Jackson? Why did these counties, in large measure, give their votes to Breckinridge, thought by some to be the representative of Calhoun democracy?

The hazardous search for an answer discovers that in north Alabama the choice was determined by party machinery and propaganda. Both Democratic candidates claimed to be the rightful heir of Jackson and since the local platforms were so similar the voter followed the leadership of the machinery. But what constituted such machinery? How effective was it? Since much of Alabama was largely in the frontier stage of development in 1860, party machinery consisted of (1) endorsement and support by party officeholders; (2) influence of local persons of status who were accepted by the community as leaders; (3) partisan newspapers and (4) party conventions' support. When concentrated, these elements usually produced for the voter the norm of party loyalty. In view of the fact that the machinery was greatly divided in most all areas of the state, the interpretation that party loyalty was decided by party machinery is not without weakness. Party machinery, no doubt, helped to increase pluralities where the candidate was strong because of other reasons. The party machinery interpretation fails to explain counties which voted contrary to dominant party machinery as Lauderdale, Autauga, and Coosa. The *Florence Gazette*, in Lauderdale, championed the cause of Breckinridge as did many of the local politicians. Still the county voted for Douglas. The vote in counties like Mobile and Montgomery where considerable support was had by all three factions is also difficult to explain by this interpretation.

Each of the foregoing interpretations contributes something to the full understanding of the situation, though no one of them is sufficient in and of itself. In addition to these explanations already offered, the economic structure of the

counties, or at least representative ones, should be examined to test the validity of the economic thesis.

Slaveholding as an economic and social factor determining political action in 1860 is a point of inquiry. For the five counties giving Douglas a plurality the average percentage of nonslaveholding families was 67 per cent. In the Bell counties the percentage of nonslaveholding families was 53 per cent, while that of the Breckinridge counties was 64 per cent. A hasty conclusion might be drawn that the nonslaveholders voted for Breckinridge or Douglas.³ These percentages do not give a true picture, however, and in themselves contribute to the view that the slaveholders voted for Bell. This could be an outgrowth of the idea that the Whig party in Alabama was the party of the slaveholders and big planters and that the Democratic party consisted mainly of the small farmers and nonslaveholders. Any interpretation based on the above figures must take into account the fact that large percentages of nonslaveholders in one county will decrease when taken in a group with other counties which have lower percentages. The reverse is also to be considered.

A more exact conclusion can be made only by examining specific counties within each group. When this is done, there seems to be little distinction. Counties having high percentages of slaveholders as well as those having lower percentages owning slaves may be found in all three groups. The average number of slaves per slaveholder seems to be no crucial factor in the casting of votes. Perhaps it is significant, however, that no county in which the average number of slaves per owner was twenty or more gave Douglas first or second place. Of the five Douglas counties, in two (Lauderdale and Madison) there was an average of 10-15 slaves per slaveholder, in one (Lawrence) the average was between 15-20, and in two (Mobile and Marshall) the averages were less than ten. Small farmers,

³See David Y. Thomas, "Southern Nonslaveholders in the Election of 1860," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXVI (March-December, 1911), pp. 224-237. His conclusion is that there is very strong evidence against the view that the slaveless whites were "conservative." He also advances the view that Breckinridge drew heavy support from nonslaveholders.

or those having less than 100 acres, were in a majority in Alabama and also in the majority in all of the Douglas counties. This could give an erroneous impression, however, for small farmers were in a plurality in the Bell and Breckinridge counties as well.

Even when a farm of fifty acres is used as the norm for a small farm, no meaningful pattern is discerned on the land-holding basis. Of the seventeen counties in which the majority of farms consisted of fifty acres, or less, only two went for Douglas. The interpretation of the vote as an indication of party loyalty seems to be more valid in relation to the Douglas vote. The candidate from Illinois received the greatest support in old Democratic strongholds. All the counties giving Douglas a plurality voted Democratic consistently between 1848-1860, some even when Whiggery was strongest. Those giving Douglas second highest vote were also historically Democratic counties with the exception of the Whig landslide of 1848. Even with this explanation, however, the problem of why Douglas was chosen over Breckinridge remains unsolved. Both were Democrats. Both were candidates of a Democratic group. Both had party machinery supporting them in Alabama.

The economic structure of the counties which chose Douglas over Breckinridge offers a possible solution. Mobile County may be used as an illustration. There were only 21 farms consisting of 100 acres or more in Mobile County in 1860. There was no farm over 500 acres. Over 87 per cent of the total farms had less than 50 acres. Facts indicate the absence of a planter class of any consequence, if not entirely. The fact that only 440 bales of cotton were produced by Mobilians in 1860 suggests that the farming in that county was of a different kind from the cotton farming of the great part of the state. Indeed, it was different, for Mobile County produced \$89,225 worth of market garden products in 1860.⁴ This amount was over half the state's total. The Mobile farmers were largely commercial farmers, constituting almost half of the county's population and quite different from the cotton growers.

⁴U.S. Census Office, **Eighth Census of the United States: 1860. Agriculture** (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1865), p. 2. Hereafter cited as **Eighth Census, Agriculture**.

Agricultural and industrial laborers comprised a significant portion of the population of Mobile County.⁵ There were also over seven thousand⁶ foreign-born persons in the county, with the majority in the city of Mobile. Almost half this number was Irish⁷ laborers. The Irish comprised one-fourth of the county's population and almost a third of the city's total. When considered with native born Americans who might have been laborers, the labor force was an important factor in the politics of Mobile County.

The merchants and others engaged in commerce were unequaled in any other county. They comprised a significant part of the Mobile population. A small professional minority consisted of physicians, lawyers, teachers, editors, and ministers. The election returns show that no candidate received more than 3,770 out of the total vote, which leads one to believe that the small farmers (87.5 per cent) did not vote together, nor did the nonslaveholders (61 per cent) vote as a bloc. It is suggested that the foreign segment of the population would not have voted for the Constitutional Union ticket because of its supporters' close association with the American movement four years earlier. They probably voted for Douglas.⁸ A powerful figure leading the Douglas campaign in Mobile was John Forsythe, influential editor of the *Mobile Register*. His efforts

⁵It is significant that there were over 20,000 people in Alabama in 1860 following occupations of either blacksmith, carpenter, laborer, mechanic, or servant, while planters and farm laborers were only 82,000. U.S. Census Office, **Eighth Census of the United States: 1860. Population** (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), p. 11. Hereafter cited as **Eighth Census, Population**.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10. The white population of Mobile County was 28,559 and 7,734 foreign born. Of this number 3,307 were Irish and 1,276 Germans.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. xxxii. In Mobile County, there were 774 persons employed in "Manufacturing" alone, according to U.S. Census Office, **Eighth Census of the United States: 1860. Manufacturers** (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1865), pp. 8-9.

⁸A reader wrote to the editor of the *Montgomery Daily Mail*: "It is understood in our neighborhood that a number of . . . foreigners in your city expect to support the Douglas ticket in the approaching election. We consider all such as enemies to the South and ask them closely watched at the polls that the patronage of the public may be withheld." Alabama **Greensboro Beacon**, October 19, 1860.

in behalf of Douglas had significant effect. Another contributing factor in Douglas' favor was his close relationship with the Illinois Central Railroad, the construction of which, with Mobile as a terminus, Douglas was greatly responsible.

In Lauderdale, like Mobile, the economy was more diversified than most Alabama counties. Too, the farming was commercial to a greater degree than the majority of Alabama counties. This county produced the second highest amount of market garden crops, exceeded only by Mobile. Diversified agriculture is shown by the large quantities of surplus molasses and Irish potatoes, which Lauderdale produced in quantities, placing her in the third and fourth rank in the state, respectively. There were also 39 manufacturing establishments in the county employing 647 workers, the third highest in the state. The city of Florence was in this county, located on the Tennessee and carrying on trade with Memphis and other cities in the river system.

Madison County, which Douglas carried also, was like Mobile and Lauderdale in that it was the site of a trading town—Huntsville. This city, having the third largest number of white inhabitants of any of Alabama towns,⁹ carried on trade with Tennessee by way of the Tennessee River. Over 300 laborers, the majority of which were hired by industrial establishments, worked in the country. There was also a significant number of agricultural laborers. Madison also produced the highest amount of Irish potatoes and rye in the state. It is presumed that these products were for market and produced on small farms (50-100 acres), where several slaves were utilized (the average per slaveholder was 10-15).

The other two counties which voted in plurality for Douglas were Lawrence and Marshall, both on the Tennessee River. Lawrence and Lauderdale joined borders with each other as did Marshall and Madison. The only plausible explanation for these counties voting for Douglas is a multiple one. The trade

⁹Huntsville's white population in 1860 was 1,980, surpassed only by Mobile (20,854) and Montgomery (4,341). **Eighth Census, Population, p. 9.**

in Huntsville and in Florence constituted an economic tie with these counties as did the trade with Tennessee by the river. The additional factor of the influence of Douglas supporters, propaganda and newspapers from the bordering counties provided another point of strength for Douglas. There was also a political tie. Marshall and Lawrence had voted Democratic with Lauderdale and Madison in the presidential elections between 1848-1860.

The counties not in north Alabama in which Douglas placed second reflect, though in less degree, the same characteristics as Mobile, Madison, and Lauderdale counties. Both Coosa and Autauga gave second place to Douglas. The "Little Giant" received 31 per cent of the votes in Autauga and almost 34 per cent in Coosa. These counties are located in the central part of the state. The slaveholding figures are not revealing in explaining the vote. The statistics concerning the size of farms and the average number of slaves per owner simply lead to the conclusion that Autauga was more of a planter, slaveholding county than Coosa. Perhaps this does, in part, explain the higher percentage for Douglas in Coosa.

The diversified economy, however, when coupled with a historic loyalty to the Democratic party is very revealing. Both Coosa and Autauga employed over three hundred manufacturing laborers.¹⁰ In Autauga the majority of these were engaged in industrial manufacturing which produced cotton gins, machinery, and cotton and woolen goods. Prattville, a textile settlement founded by Daniel Pratt, was in this county. In addition to the significant number of laborers Autauga had diversified farming. In 1860 that county produced the second highest amount of orchard crops for sale. Autauga also grew 60,000 bushels of peas and beans for the market in 1860. Coosa, similarly, produced a large amount of market crops. Cheese, as another market item, was produced in greater quantity in Coosa County than any other Alabama county. The Coosa farmers also harvested the second highest amount of Irish potatoes in 1860.

¹⁰Laborers are defined as those employees working in manufacturing establishments not related to agriculture.

Still another factor which explains the Douglas support is the historic loyalty of the two counties (Autauga and Coosa) to the Democratic party, as contrasted with surrounding counties which had been Whig strongholds. The combined vote of Breckinridge and Douglas in these counties far exceeds any other combination and reveals a strong support for the Democratic candidates and little for Whiggery. Too, both counties were bordered by a river by which market crops were transported to Mobile and other markets. The growers of these market-garden crops usually had to find a market in a city or town, near or far. The planters purchased their furnishings through factors due to lack of money and because of the double-entry system on which they operated. Neither county, though bordering the highest cotton producing counties, produced the staple in great quantities. The presence of towns, especially Kingston and Prattville, in Autauga was a contributing factor to Douglas support. Other factors, such as the absence of an appreciable trading interest, the lack of strong Douglas leadership¹¹ in these counties (Autauga and Coosa) and their proximity to Montgomery, Dallas and Lowndes counties overruled the above conditions to give Breckinridge the majority, though by a very small margin. This was particularly true in Coosa where the majority of farmers owned less than fifty acres each, and also where market crops were produced in large quantities.

In addition to these central counties giving Douglas second place, many of the north Alabama counties gave him the second highest number of votes. Breckinridge carried most of these northern counties. This is explained by traditional party loyalty and machinery, influenced by propaganda and certain unexplainable factors as habit, prejudice, fear and imagination. Party loyalty was identified with Breckinridge. Another very important factor influencing this identification was the advantage that Breckinridge had as a Southerner and as a "Southern Candidate." When the commercial leaders, the

¹¹Autauga was the home of Douglas' friend, Senator Benjamin Fitzpatrick, whose influence was significant in the Douglas vote in both Autauga and Coosa, and later in the co-operationist vote in those counties.

market-garden farmers, the "industrial" or manufacturing laborers and/or the foreigners, particularly Irish, were not of sufficient number and strength to out weigh the cotton planters and other closely related groups (such as tutors, lawyers, factors, ministers and even agricultural laborers), Democratic party loyalty was identified with Breckinridge. When these above-mentioned groups were important and a significant part of the population, and where it was usually shown by the presence of a "trading" town as contrasted to a "farmer" town, Douglas received a considerable vote. The exception to this statement was Tuscaloosa County, where party loyalty to the old Whig Party turned the vote to Bell for second place. The exception invites a corollary. The presence or absence of a historical Democratic party loyalty, particularly of the Jacksonian brand, is a factor in explaining the Douglas and Breckinridge vote. Where such loyalty was present Douglas had much better support.

The Bell vote has sometimes been explained as the old Whig vote, and that it came from planter, large slaveholding counties. In Alabama in 1860, Bell carried only five counties, Baldwin, Butler, Covington, Macon, and Greene. Of these, only three, Macon, Butler, and Greene, may be called "planter counties." In Butler and Covington the average slaves per slaveholder was less than ten. In three of the five, Baldwin, Butler and Covington, the majority did not own slaves. The only one in which the average slaves per slaveholder was twenty or more was Greene. Only Macon and Greene had majorities of farmers whose farms included 100 acres or more each. In fact, in Butler, over 40 per cent of the farms were less than fifty acres. In Baldwin, over 75 per cent were smaller than fifty acres. Also, the majority of farmers in Covington had land holdings of less than fifty acres. These facts indicate the weakness of the planter interpretation. The weakness is further shown by the fact that of the ten Alabama counties in which the majority of farms were over 100 acres, only two voted for Bell. Also, of the thirteen counties in which the average slaves per slaveholder was fifteen or more, only two gave Bell a plurality. In 1860, nine Alabama counties each produced 40,000 or more bales of cotton. Bell carried only two of the nine. The thesis that the Constitutional Union Party in

Alabama drew its greatest strength from planters owning a large number of slaves is weakened considerably by this observation and conclusion.¹²

Part of the above thesis, that the Bell vote reflected old Whig areas, is validated by the consistency of four of the five Bell counties. Counties where Bell received the second highest number of votes also illustrates this thesis. There was little distinction, however, in the economy of the Bell counties and that of several counties which cast plurality for Breckinridge. Such a fact suggests that the voter made his choice between Breckinridge and Bell on grounds other than economic. The exceptions to similarity of economic structure of Bell and Breckinridge counties are Baldwin and Covington. Baldwin produced a considerable quantity of market-garden crops and also employed over three hundred workers. It is significant, however, that the workers differed from those in Douglas counties. The Baldwin workers were utilized entirely in lumber, naval products, and related industry. A higher percentage of the population owned slaves than even in Butler County, and the average number of slaves per slaveholder was higher. These facts infer that slavery was utilized by Baldwin farmers even more than by the farmers of Mobile, Madison, or Lauderdale. In Baldwin, however, the commercial farmer is reflected in a 17.6 per cent vote for Douglas. Even though the agricultural products were different, the Baldwin interests in slavery as agricultural labor makes it similar to Butler in that respect. Covington's economy, like the Breckinridge counties in most other ways, was different in that it produced six-sevenths of the state's total of cane sugar. This is suggested as being a

¹²See also, Grady McWhiney, "Were the Whigs a Class Party in Alabama?" *Journal of Southern History*, XXIII (November, 1957), pp. 510-522. His conclusion is that the Whigs were not a class party any more than the Democrats. Charles Sellers, Jr., in "Who Were the Southern Whigs?" *American Historical Review*, LIX (January, 1954), pp. 341-346, resolves the apparent contradiction by pointing out that there were two kinds of Whigs, the commercial and banking interests of cities and towns, and the slaveholding planters. The weakness of this statement is that the term "planters" is not inclusive enough in an area of a Whig majority. Thomas B. Alexander, Kit C. Carter, Jack R. Lister, Jerry C. Oldshue, and Winfred G. Sandlin in "Who Were the Alabama Whigs?" *Alabama Review*, XVI (January, 1963) pp. 5-19, cast further doubt on the traditional interpretation of Whiggery.

good cause for Covington's traditional support of Whiggery. Covington was the only Alabama county which did not send delegates to the Alabama Democratic Convention of 1860. This fact indicates the lack of strong local Democratic machinery or support. The Bell vote, then, may be explained by party loyalty, particularly when such loyalty was directed by partisan newspapers and political leaders like Thomas Hill Watts of Montgomery County. The vote in 1860, when compared to the votes of the fifties, indicates that these counties, particularly Butler, Macon, Covington, and Greene, reflect the pockets of old Whig support, though not peculiarly characterized by the dominance of large slaveholders or a "planter aristocracy." The high number of south and central Alabama counties giving Bell second place also shows the steadily declining Whig strength.

There was a diversity among the counties which went for Breckinridge. This was to be expected, of course, when the general majority voted for the Southern Democratic candidate. Some of the counties with the highest percentage of nonslaveholding families, as Winston (98 per cent), Walker and Blount, both with 93 per cent, as well as those with the lowest, illustrated by Dallas (16 per cent), Wilcox and Sumter (both 24 per cent), gave Breckinridge pluralities. This observation and similar facts caused James Ford Rhodes¹³ and Albert Bushnell Hart¹⁴ to point out, perhaps in amazement, that the nonslaveholder voted with the slaveholder and that the yeoman farmer voted the same as the plantation owner. By comparing percentages of votes cast for any candidate with percentages of slaveholders and large farmers, it is evident that the small farmers did not vote as a bloc nor did the planters. For example, Breckinridge received only about a third of the vote in Mobile County even though 94 per cent had farms less than 100 acres. There (Mobile County) 39 per cent of the families held slaves. These 39 per cent probably constituted more than 39 per cent of the voters. Another supporting item is that despite the fact that 50 per cent of the farmers in Mobile were definitely small

¹³James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States, 1850-1877*, 7 vols. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1912-1914), I, p. 345.

¹⁴Albert Bushnell Hart, *Slavery and Abolition*, Vol. XVI of *The American Nation Series*, ed. A. B. Hart, 28 vols. (New York: Harper & Bros. 1904-18), p. 76.

farmers, no one candidate came near to receiving that proportion of the vote.

The Breckinridge counties also ranged from the richest to the poorest. Winston, with a per capita tax of less than 18¢ as well as Dallas with \$5.45 per capita tax voted for Breckinridge.¹⁵ The per capita value of property was \$168 in Winston but \$6,431 in Dallas, yet both gave large pluralities to the Southern candidate. The highest cotton producing counties as well as some producing the lowest amounts gave Breckinridge the nod over Douglas and Bell. Counties of the north, central, south, east and west sections of the state gave Breckinridge pluralities. Even counties which previously had voted Whig as often as Democratic in the three presidential elections preceding 1860 gave a majority to the Southern Democratic candidate.

After analyzing the Alabama counties, the economic structure and the historical loyalties to parties, a loose, multiple interpretation is possible. In the northern part of Alabama, where the Democratic party had reigned almost supreme since the days of Jackson and even when Whigs were victorious throughout the rest of the state and nation, the Democratic voters split their vote between Breckinridge and Douglas. In that area a high percentage of the old Whigs voted for Bell. Both these choices came from party loyalty. The choice between Douglas and Breckinridge seems to have been partly determined by the presence or absence of several of the following factors. The presence of a significant number of industrial laborers, a trading city, a noticeable percentage of commercial (growing products other than cotton for the market) farmers, and everyday connections with other such counties and states, particularly Tennessee, and/or cities was reflected by a plurality for Douglas. Where these factors were present, they were normally reflected in the pro-Douglas newspapers and political leaders. In this same area, where the cotton farmers or hill farmers were present in large numbers without the above elements to outweigh them, Breckinridge received a majority.

¹⁵Bessie Martin, **Desertion of Alabama Troops from the Confederate Army** (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 54. It is interesting to note, however, that four of the five counties giving Bell a plurality ranked moderately high or high in per capita taxes.

In the southern and central division of the state where cotton farming and planter aspiration (as important as planter *de facto*) was very prevalent and where Whig strength had been centered in the fifties, the voters split between Breckinridge and Bell, swelling in some cases the old Whig numbers of a generation earlier, and in others the old Democratic percentage. Even in this section, however, the presence of the previously listed Douglas factors, as in Autauga and Coosa, is reflected in a considerable vote for Douglas. The decisive factor in a voter's choosing between Bell and Breckinridge was probably based more on emotion than economics, more on grudge than government, and more on personality than policies. Here is where the political leaders played an important role; where the lines were less distinctly drawn on issues. Economics probably had more effect in determining the Douglas vote while party loyalty determined, in a great measure, the Bell and Breckinridge vote. Many voters probably voted for Breckinridge over Bell because they felt the Bell party was attempting to dodge an issue. The voter's real or imagined knowledge of the Bell and Breckinridge records and the mental prediction of future courses of action to insure Southern Rights were most important whenever issues were considered. This factor was probably the determining one for thinking voters who might have considered Bell and Breckinridge apart from blind and somewhat irrational political loyalty. An important, though unascertainable, factor in much of the voting was irrationality. There must have been a significant number who voted without any economic or political reason. Some probably voted "against" more than "for." In some cases the voter probably voted against a candidate because of personal enmity, not against the candidate, but against some of his local supporters.

A man's temperament in the situation of 1860 would probably determine to a degree whether he would join sides with the fire-eaters supporting Breckinridge or the less fiery Bell supporters. No doubt the frontier temperament of the hill country dwellers had much to do with their support of Breckinridge. It seems from research that small farmers and big planters, slaveholders and nonslaveholders, when producing cotton and aspiring to the "planter dream," split their votes between Bell and Breckinridge. On the other hand, small farmers, big farmers,

slaveholders and nonslaveholders, when producing market-garden crops, trading outside the avenues of cotton factors, and near a trading town, voted for Douglas except in an area strongly influenced by Breckinridge and Bell propaganda, and where a record of Whiggery and/or the Calhoun Democracy existed. Finally, unknowable mainsprings prompted many choices. As Nathaniel Stephenson has put it:

We have come to recognize that men have always misapprehended themselves, contradicted themselves, obeyed primal impulses and then deluded themselves with sophistications upon the springs of action. . . . We are prone to forget that we act from the subconscious quite as often as from the conscious influence from motives that arise out of the dim parts of our being, from the midst of shadows that psychology has only recently begun to bring to light, where sense subtler than the obvious makes use of fear, intuition, prejudice, habit, and illusion and too often play with us as the wind with blown leaves.¹⁶

¹⁶Nathaniel Stephenson, "Abraham Lincoln and The Union," *The War of Secession*, Vol. XIV, in *The Chronicles of America Series*, 26 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919-1924), Part I, pp. 8-9.

THE BIRMINGHAM & SOUTHERN RAILROAD

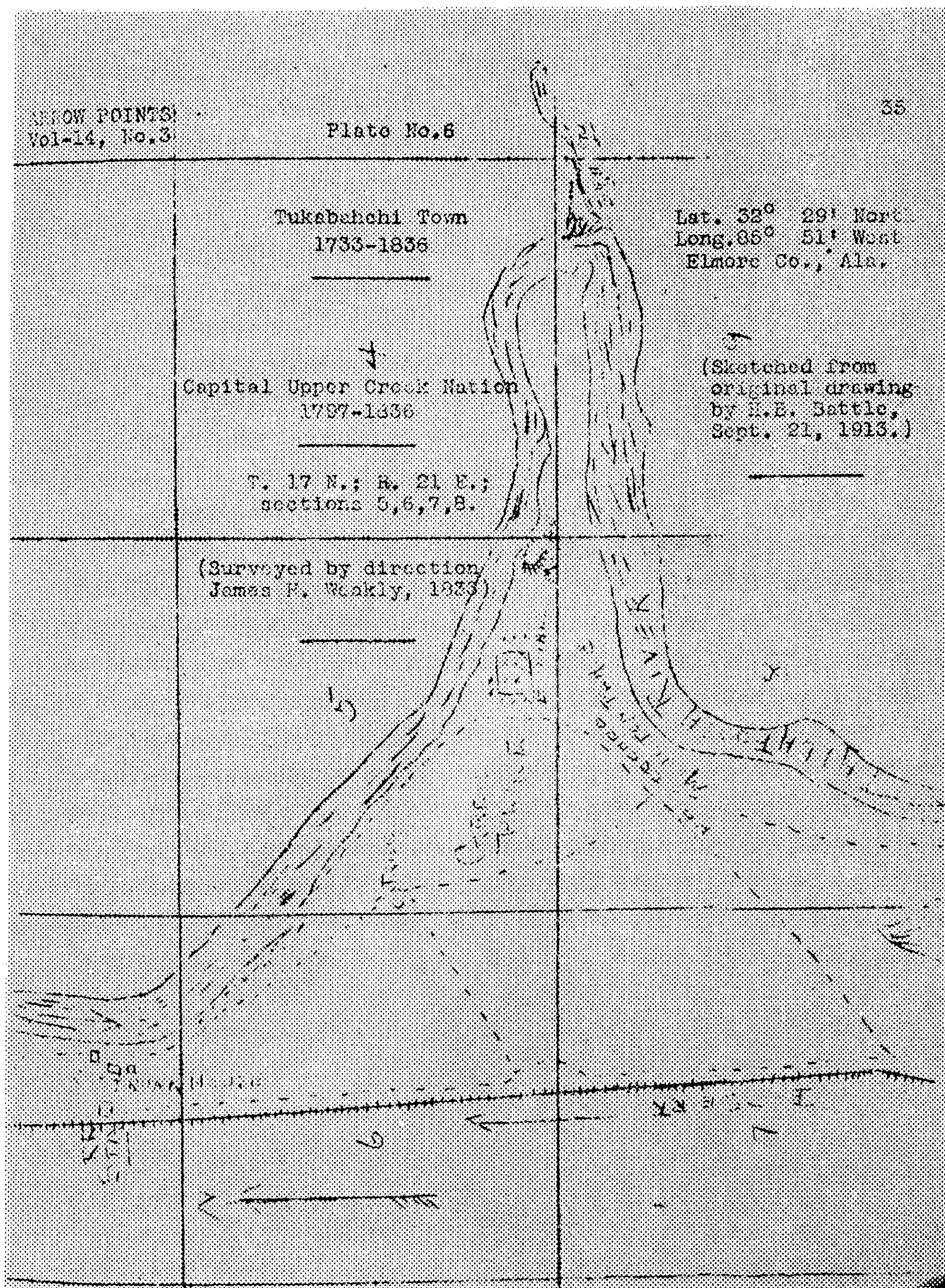
By Michael J. Dunn, III

The historic plain of Tukabahchi, which once, as capitol of the Upper Creek Indian nation, a century and a half ago echoed to the clear-voiced harangues of Tecumseh, echoed until March 5, 1965 to the nasal bleat of a latter-day Tecumseh. While the original Tecumseh was a famed Indian warrior-leader who came down from Ohio in 1811 to speak under the famous old Council Tree, hoping to rally the Creeks against the encroaching whites, the modern namesake of the famous chieftain was a diesel locomotive. The engine whose horn was heard regularly over the historic plain was owned and operated by the Birmingham & Southeastern Railroad Company, whose eight mile line between Tallassee and Milstead crossed the fields of Tuckabatchie, as it was spelled in the railroad's timetables and tariffs.

That proud name, given to the locomotive at formal ceremonies putting it into service in 1953, was symbolic of the B&SE, a railroad that throughout its long career tried never to lose the gentle and personal touch. Finally abandoned in 1965, the victim of a changing economy and motor truck competition, the B&SE deserves more of an epitaph than the meager and yellowing newspaper notices that attended its passing, or tomorrow's string of rotting ties along a weed-grown, trackless right of way.

Operating just eight miles of line—plus necessary yard and side tracks—made the Birmingham & Southeastern a very short railroad indeed. Among the nineteen line-haul, point-to-point railroads operating in Alabama at the time of the B&SE's demise, only the four-mile Sumter & Choctaw (in Sumter County) was shorter.¹ And that was only because the S&C had been the subject of some drastic amputations in recent years. Also smaller was the now-defunct Tuskegee Railroad, which not only lay near the B&SE but shared some of the same owners and officials until its 1963 abandonment.

¹Railroad Mileage by States, December 31, 1962 (Washington: Bureau of Railway Economics of the Association of American Railroads, 1963), 3.



Tallassee has been a textile producing community ever since the mill first opened in 1844, an enterprise of the Tallassee Falls Manufacturing Company, chartered the very last day of 1841.² Its original belfried building was joined over the years by a welter of substantial grey masonry structures, most of them opposite it on the east side of the Tallapoosa River. Across the river's jumbled and rocky bed was stretched a dam to provide water power. It was freight traffic from this mill, now known as Tallassee Mills and a unit of Mount Vernon Mills, Incorporated, which mainly justified the continued existence of the Bump & Slide Easy, as it was fondly called.

Mill shipping and receiving was heavy enough to force consideration of a railroad to replace the inadequate transport provided by such expedients as mule teaming, though the mill continued to use mule teams locally beyond 1918.³ Therefore it had the Tallassee & Montgomery Railway chartered on August 10, 1895, authorized to link Tallassee in Elmore County with a point on the Western Railway of Alabama now known as Milledgeville, in Macon County.⁴ Construction began in September, 1895, and was completed the following March. The work crews consisted of the forces of Messrs. Watkins and Hardaway, contractors, supplemented by the railroad company's own men.⁵ It is recorded that on February 6, 1896, the first steam locomotive made its appearance in Tallassee. Its accompaniment was gasps of wonder from the assembled crowd that had patiently awaited its arrival, along with the squalling and shrieking of terrified babies and children. Following a not uncommon railroad custom of the time, the engine bore the name Anna Roman, after the daughter of a mill owner.⁶ The track reached the mill buildings across the river by a new bridge, completed at the same time as

²Virginia Noble Golden, **A History of Tallassee for Tallasseeans** (Tallassee, Alabama: Tallassee Mills of Mount Vernon-Woodbury Mills, Incorporated, 1949), 17-18. Hereinafter cited as Golden, **History of Tallassee**.

³Golden, **History of Tallassee**, 55.

⁴**Interstate Commerce Commission Reports** (Washington: Interstate Commerce Commission), CXXXV (1928), 52. Hereinafter cited as **ICC Reports**.

⁵**ICC Reports**, CXXXV, 64.

⁶Golden, **History of Tallassee**, 40.

the railroad and fitted also for vehicular traffic. That bridge was washed out in 1919 when flood waters burst the dam above Tallassee, and only after twelve months was a new permanent bridge completed.⁷

The T&M Railway remained under the control of the Tallassee Falls Manufacturing Company until April 15, 1912, when it was sold to the newly-formed Union Springs & Northern Railway Company.⁸

The Union Springs & Northern had been born almost simultaneously with the new century. Preliminary planning came to a climax on March 8, 1901, when the US&N was incorporated and organized.⁹ In line with its charter, the US&N's first segment completed lay between Union Springs and Fort Davis and was put into operation in November, 1901. This portion, like all the mileage which the US&N eventually acquired by construction—to follow precise Interstate Commerce Commission terminology—was built under contract by William Blount. For ten years, however, Union Springs “and Northern” meant no more than seven and a half miles of railroad trackage northward from the metropolis in its corporate title. Though the US&N was quite short in its own right, however, the US&N's management reportedly secured an arrangement with the Seaboard Air Line whereby the trains of the UnSafe & Nasty operated over Seaboard tracks between Fort Davis and Montgomery, after proceeding up from Union Springs. The distance for such trains was forty-six miles; the year would have been around 1904.

Two important amendments to the original 1901 charter reveal the planning that was soon to expand the railroad five-fold. By the terms of the changed charter, amended April 26, 1911 and effective May 1, the road was to be known henceforth as the Birmingham & Southeastern Railway and was empowered to build and operate additional mileage, to construct which Mr. Blount was authorized in a contract dated June 27, 1911.¹⁰

⁷Golden, *History of Tallassee*, 17, 40, 64-66.

⁸ICC Reports, CXXXV, 52 and 64.

⁹ICC Reports, CXXXV, 52.

¹⁰ICC Reports, CXXXV, 53.

He headed to New York to secure capital; some of the earlier funds of the US&N had come from Baltimore and a railroad investment brokerage house, Middendorf, Williams and Company.

While construction crews inched their way between Fort Davis and Milstead, the B&SE arranged to buy the 6.28 mile line of the Tallassee & Montgomery Railway. The twenty miles of new trackage was completed to Milstead around June of 1912, coinciding with the date the T&M sale was made effective (its final date was June 24).¹¹ Working then from a junction near the present shops, a mile short of downtown Tallassee, crews put final touches on the B&SE by completing fourteen additional miles to Eclectic on June 15, 1913, and the B&SE reached its zenith with 48.20 route miles.

Fleshing out the bare bones of a corporate biography are many anecdotes about the construction and operation of the line, related to the author by Colonel Roberts Blount, who returned to Union Springs after the end of World War I, in which he had seen service in France as a lieutenant in transportation service. Following his return and discharge from the army engineers, he took a position with the B&SE. In 1944 he succeeded his late brother as third president of the line that had felt Blount influence ever since its construction.

Sentimental enough to name his first engine the Kathleen, after his daughter, William Blount could also move boldly and swiftly when need arose. On one such occasion the Central of Georgia, a railroad already serving Union Springs, disputed the new line's right to insert a crossing into the Central track near the water and power plant, despite the fact that President Blount came to battle armed with a franchise from the city fathers, something the Central lacked. To thwart its upstart rival, whose track by now had been built right up to the crossing site, the big road stationed a row of boxcars on its own track. Flushed with determination and, no doubt, righteous indignation, Blount had his engine ram the obstructing cars and smash them to pieces; then he put in the crossing diamond. The

¹¹ICC Reports, CXXXV, 53.

little road's president perhaps felt occasionally that he had won a Pyrrhic victory, as resulting hostility forced him for some years to post a guard at that point.

World War I cut off all new railroad financing and many a railroad expansion plan was stillborn. Thus affected, reminisced Colonel Blount in 1963, were dreams of the B&SE too. It had aspired to sharing in the prospective coal traffic to the port of Panama City, Florida, and to tapping vast pine forests by building up toward Rockford and Pell City. Plans were shelved for north and south extensions that would have achieved these aims. As a result, traffic remained primarily agricultural except for the intermediate segment serving industrialized Tallassee. A compress as Union Springs, for example, availed itself of favorable mill-in-transit rates to prepare lint for foreign shipment.

President William Blount, the Colonel's father, turned attention in his final years to attempts to improve the lot of America's numerous small independent railroads and was active in the organization and direction of the American Short Line Railroad Association, serving as a vice president of that group until his death, July 27, 1919. His son, Winton Blount, succeeded to the B&SE presidency.¹²

World War I and government operation of all railroads pinched the short line railroads of the land especially hard. Partly in consequence of this and partly as a result of the December, 1919, flood, the B&SE went into receivership July 26, 1920. It was unable to meet the interest payment on its debt of \$680,000 worth of first and second mortgage bonds.¹³ The rampaging waters had not only damaged Tallassee railroad facilities—even sweeping two loaded coal hoppers off their track and dumping them into the deluge—but had also inundated or washed out much of the line to Milstead, including track both on fills and on trestles.¹⁴ (Flooding as late as 1961

¹²All the anecdotes in the foregoing four paragraphs were related in a series of interviews, Colonel Roberts Blount with Michael Dunn, January and June, 1963.

¹³ICC Reports, XCIV (1925), 307-8.

¹⁴Golden, *History of Tallassee*, 64.

was still plaguing B&SE. When the Tallapoosa spilled over its banks near the B&SE's high steel bridge six miles south of Tallassee, a washed-out fill kept the line shut down from February 25 to March 5.)

Responding to the need to trim expenses, the receivers in fall, 1923, even replaced many steam passenger runs with cost-cutting gasoline coaches. The end of the receivership came into sight when bondholders agreed to accept about thirty-three cents on the dollar, offered by a new company to be formed to take over the line.¹⁵

Certificates of public and convenience and necessity authorized the reorganized firm to operate the line and were issued by the ICC on December 23, 1924¹⁶ and by the Alabama regulatory agency the following April.¹⁷ The Interstate Commerce Commission heard testimony to the effect that the line's survival was insured by a promising future hauling not only the agricultural needs and products of the 48 miles of gently rolling farmland it served, but also mill traffic and expected dam construction materials that alone were projected to amount to 16,000 carloads. It could count too on hauling timber products from the estimated 500,000 feet of standing timber along the uppermost portion of the line, a task that would help keep the B&SE busy for an anticipated fifteen years.¹⁸

The Birmingham & Southeastern Railroad was the title of the organized corporation. It was organized January 31, 1925 and on that day purchased the assets of the B&SE Railway at a receivers' sale.¹⁹ Every day its local train would plod unglamorous and unhonored between Eclectic and Union Springs, dependent on slim agricultural traffic, supplemented eventually by a little gravel and aggregates. Consistent industrial traffic and heavy passenger patronage came only on the seven-mile

¹⁵ICC Reports, XCIV, 308.

¹⁶ICC Reports, XCIV, 309.

¹⁷Minutes of the Alabama Public Service Commission (and predecessor bodies), in the offices of the Public Service Commission, Montgomery, IV, 364-5, Docket 4632. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Public Service Commission.

¹⁸ICC Reports, XCIV, 308-9.

Tallassee-Milstead segment, which benefited from a fifty percent expansion carried out by the mill and by an extensive program of dam construction undertaken by the Alabama Power Company. This boost came in 1923.²⁰ Before the dam-building era would close, ten years later, the B&SE was to prove an indispensable ally in completing four dam jobs, beginning with work on a new dam right at Tallassee in 1923.

Biggest of all was construction at Martin Dam, ten miles above Tallassee at Cherokee Bluff. Near Asberry or Kent on the Eclectic line there veered off to the north and east a tortuous spur track which the power company and its contractors had constructed to provide a rail link to the dam site. Over the tight curves and lofty trestles of this track moved the cars of construction material and equipment, sometimes coming over the B&SE from Milstead in such volume (up to 125 cars a day) that the little road had to rent extra engines from the Western to handle them.

Martin Dam activity was then followed by work at Yates Dam, three miles upstream from town. Supplies reaching it were delivered by B&SE over a track that crossed the Tallapoosa River atop the dam at Tallassee and ran up the east side of the river. Finally attention reverted to Tallassee and Thurlow Dam. Originally constructed with B&SE's help in 1923, it was stripped of the new unnecessary Yates Dam spur line and built thirty feet higher.

A third of a century later, Colonel Blount was still proud of the achievements of the 1923-33 decade, which must have been the golden age of the B&SE. As evidence he cited the figure of 22,000 cars handled for Martin Dam alone²¹ and the fact that though the railroad borrowed something like \$400,000 to make ready for this boom, it paid off \$850,000 as a result of the spurt in business.²²

¹⁹**Moody's Transportation Manual**, 1962 (New York: Moody's Investors Service, 1962), 538.

²⁰Golden, **History of Tallassee**, 66-68.

²¹**The Tallassee Tribune**, May 16, 1963.

²²Interviews, Colonel Roberts Blount with Michael Dunn, January and June, 1963.

In a far-sighted move, the B&SE in 1930 asked authorization to institute experimental store-door delivery service within a two-and-quarter-mile radius of the depot (which was located beneath the bluff atop which perches Tallassee's business district). That petition, however, was denied by regulatory authorities.²³

The volume of freight along the extremities of the B&SE began to diminish as Depression gripped the land and as trucks nibbled at the vulnerable agricultural traffic. Service was discontinued unofficially on the Eclectic end by the mid-1930's, when there was no longer any perceptible demand for rail freight hauling service to or from the area. Abandoning this part of the line and the similarly profitless Union Springs end was the only way to keep the company solvent and capable of rendering continued service between Tallassee and Milstead. The wolf was at the door!

This on February 27, 1937, the abandonment petition was presented to the Interstate Commerce Commission, arbiter of such matters. There was, alleged B&SE, no reasonable prospect of future traffic sufficient to pay maintenance and operating costs. Inconvenience would be slight. Except for farming there was no industry on the lines to be dropped that was not served by other railroads.²⁴ Still ready to offer service were the Central of Georgia at Union Springs, Seaboard at Fort Davis, and Western Railway of Alabama at Milstead. The B&SE could retrieve an estimated \$100,000 in scrap value and recover additional funds by selling unneeded real estate. Even such little things as saving the expense of maintaining an interlocking plant at the Western crossing at Milstead would help contribute to the financial well being of the surviving operation.

On April 13 the ICC consented. By letter of July 22 the vice president of the B&SE informed the Commission that operations on the portions authorized had been discontinued on May 19.

²³Minutes, Public Service Commission, X, 176.

²⁴ICC Reports, CCXXI (1938), 284 and following.

Up the steep and winding three-quarter-mile grade into Union Springs chuffed the last train in the May darkness. During the waning years no passenger trains were run into Union Springs. The only sign of any passenger service at all was the presence at the rear of the freight train of a combination coach-baggage car; in final years it carried no riders to speak of but was retained for the small amount of mail and package freight still entrusted to the rails. The trains of that era were scheduled to leave Tallassee around five in the afternoon and might arrive at Union Springs any time between two in the morning and nine in the forenoon. There the engine would complete some switching chores, take on water at the big tank, be turned on the turntable that distinguished the yards, and if time permitted it would rest a few hours in the small enginehouse. This was the heart-tearing routine, like that of its countless happier predecessors, through which the last little train went on its last night at Union Springs. Watching it was President Winton Blount, filled with immeasurable sadness.

Recollections of old-timers and study of the depreciation records of the railroad enable the scholar to reconstruct on paper the facilities of the 1930s. There were depots at Eclectic, Asberry, Tallassee, Milstead, Liverpool, and a depot-office at Union Springs; the Fort Davis station was the property of the Seaboard. Water stations were located at Union Springs and Tallassee, and the employees recall that the same communities were sites of the line's only two turntables. At Tallassee was located the sole coal-loading facility for filling steam locomotive tenders. The wye tracks at Milstead and Tallassee in use at the end of operations must also have been there thirty years back. Though there was a small shop or engine shed at Union Springs, the main shop was at Tallassee. The B&SE forces at the shop in Tallassee handled even the most challenging of repair and maintenance duties, including extensive and complicated boiler repairs on steam engines and new paint jobs on the brightly colored diesels.

Through the years of World War II and afterward there continued on the Milstead-Tallassee segment a full range of services: passenger, freight, mail and express. Passengers rode doodlebugs; three steam locomotives shared freight assign-

ments. Later on passenger and mail service ended, and express came to Tallassee's big yellow Victorian depot in the green trucks of REA Express, for distribution by the B&SE. By 1964 rail service was restricted to freight only, handled five days a week for the mill, for a few customers located along the one-mile spur that remained as a cut off remnant of the abandoned line to Eclectic, and to other customers who either had little warehouses near the station or who unloaded or loaded cars at the public team track there—all at Tallassee. It was the mill that provided most of the business at Tallassee, but eventually truck competition began taking much of that traffic, just as it had already taken most of the non-mill freight handled into the city. Elsewhere on the line in recent years there had been a one-shot flurry of activity as a pipeline was built past Tallassee. Much of the pipe was brought in by rail and unloaded and stockpiled at the siding near Gibson or the pulpwood yard. Once in a great while the state experimental farm at Tuckabatchie, operated by Auburn University, would be the consignee of a carload of lime, spotted at a siding just opposite the farm—but from Jan. 1, 1962 to July 31, 1964 this traffic totaled just two cars.

The pinch of reduced freight volume resulted in a retrenchment of sorts in 1963 and 1964, in hopes that the B&SE could pare expenses to the bone. For example, a modified section-gang-type motor car was put into service in January, 1964 to carry mail at less cost than a larger unit then in use.²⁵ The final steam engine, long retired, was sold. Standby diesel locomotive 198 and rail motor coach 500 were put up for sale.²⁶ In offering the motor car for sale and in selling the steamer, the company was cutting strong and sentimental ties to some of the most colorful aspects of its past: the era of passenger service and the age of steam.

Pioneering in passenger handling economy—and in the vanguard of a trend that later swept many short and branch

²⁵Reply to questionnaire, P. H. Icenhour, Manager of B&SE, to Michael Dunn, January 22, 1964.

²⁶*Weekly Information Bulletin* (Washington: American Short Line Railroad Association), December 23, 1963, 506 advertises locomotive for sale. Letter, P. H. Icenhour to Michael Dunn, December 5, 1963, reports that car 500 is for sale.

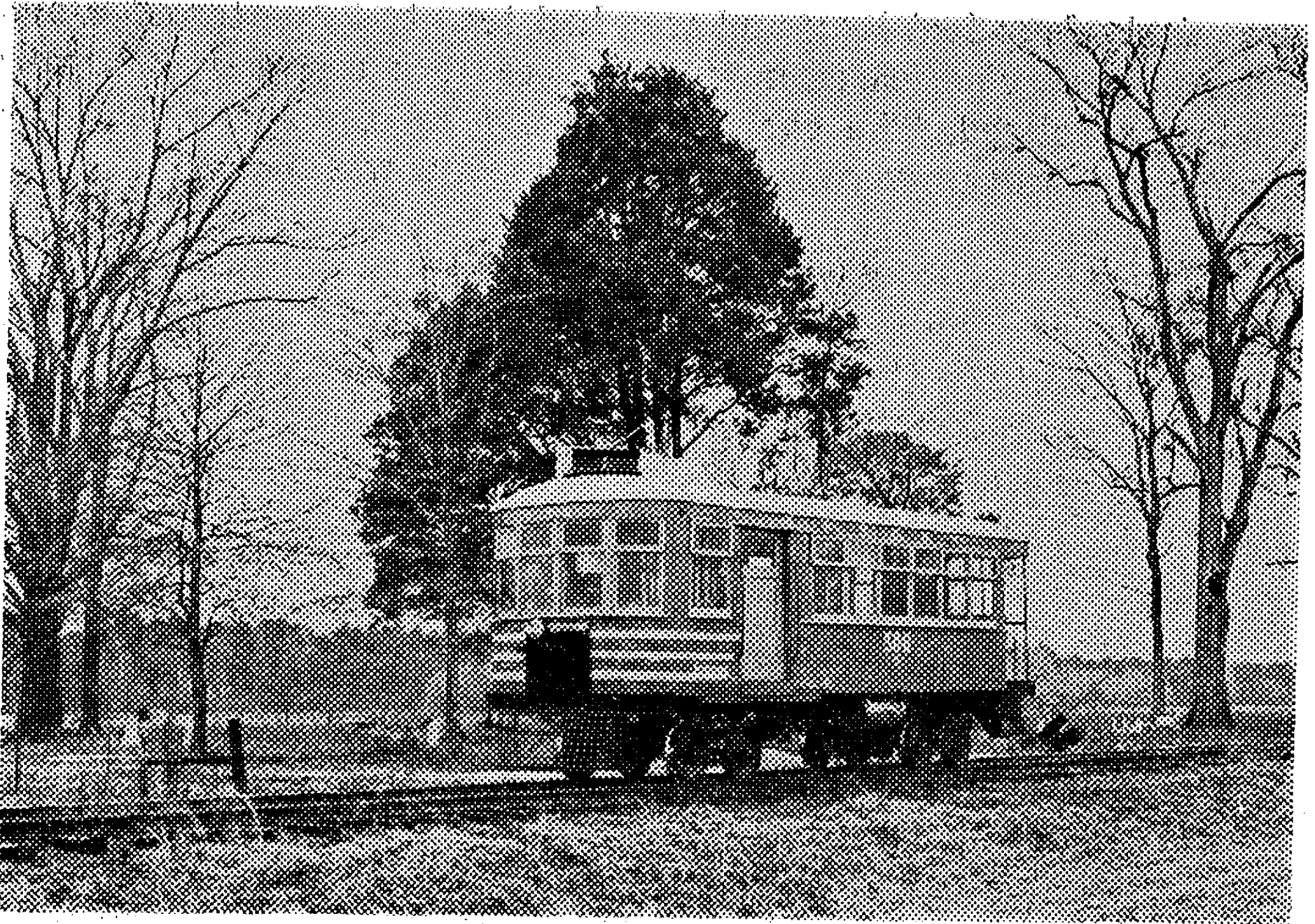


Photograph by Michael Dunn

Motor Car 500, Birmingham & Southeastern Railroad, crosses the overflow trestle near the Tallapoosa River crossing north of Milstead in January, 1963, making one of three daily mail runs scheduled by the B & SE. Car 500, built in 1923, was used in mail and passenger service until it was retired and put up for sale in 1964.

lines—the B&SE replaced conventional steam passenger trains with rail motor cars. The first gasoline-powered coach unit and trailer car were purchased in autumn, 1923 from the Edwards Railway Motor Car Company, of Sanford, North Carolina. An endorsement by President Winton Blount of the B&SE printed in an Edwards catalog of 1924 states that the cars “increased the passenger business at least twenty per cent.”²⁷ Unfortunately the original motor car was smashed after just a few years; it was involved in a turntable accident in Tallassee, but was carrying no passengers at the time. A fire in October, 1936 destroyed many records, so there is no way to determine exactly when the accident occurred or when the B&SE bought a replacement car, number 500, from the Washington & Lincolnton.

²⁷**Monthly Bulletin** (Sanford, North Carolina: Edwards Railway Motor Car Company), July 1924, unpagged.



Photograph by Michael Dunn

Car 500 rambling across the historic plain of Tukabachi on a mail trip in January, 1963.

The abandonment date of the Georgia line (the W&L died in 1932) offers the only clue to the approximate time that car 500 might have made its appearance on the B&SE roster. Though re-engined twice, 500 ended up outliving two railroads and still being in excellent condition. It was regularly used until early 1964, and was still capable of rollicking joyfully along the tangent track to Milstead and back at speeds up to sixty miles per hour at the age of forty-two! Behind the driver's cab and baggage compartment were two tiny passenger compartments seating a total of twenty riders. The Edwards firm also built a third B&SE motor car, a much larger unit that saw earlier service on the Marion & Rye Valley in Virginia and then on the Central of Georgia until 1938. It too was a passenger-baggage combination car but was much larger than 500. The underfloor engines mounted right within the trucks propelled the 502; it

was forty-four feet long and weighed twenty-three tons.²⁸ When passenger service ceased in 1955, this car was considered surplus and was retired. The carbody was cut up for scrap, but the frame and trucks were salvaged to make a weedburner.

Use of the Edwards cars was restricted to Tallassee-Milstead service. The motor train crews were outfitted in fine new uniforms and for the assistance of passengers boarding at country road crossings (bearing such picturesque names as Tripple Springs) the crewmen even put down a little step stool, "just like the Twentieth Century Limited," reminisced Colonel Blount.²⁹ Busiest seasons for passenger trains were the summers during the 1920s, when vacationists were drawn to the newly formed lakes along the Tallapoosa. They helped swell monthly passenger receipts as high as three thousand dollars.

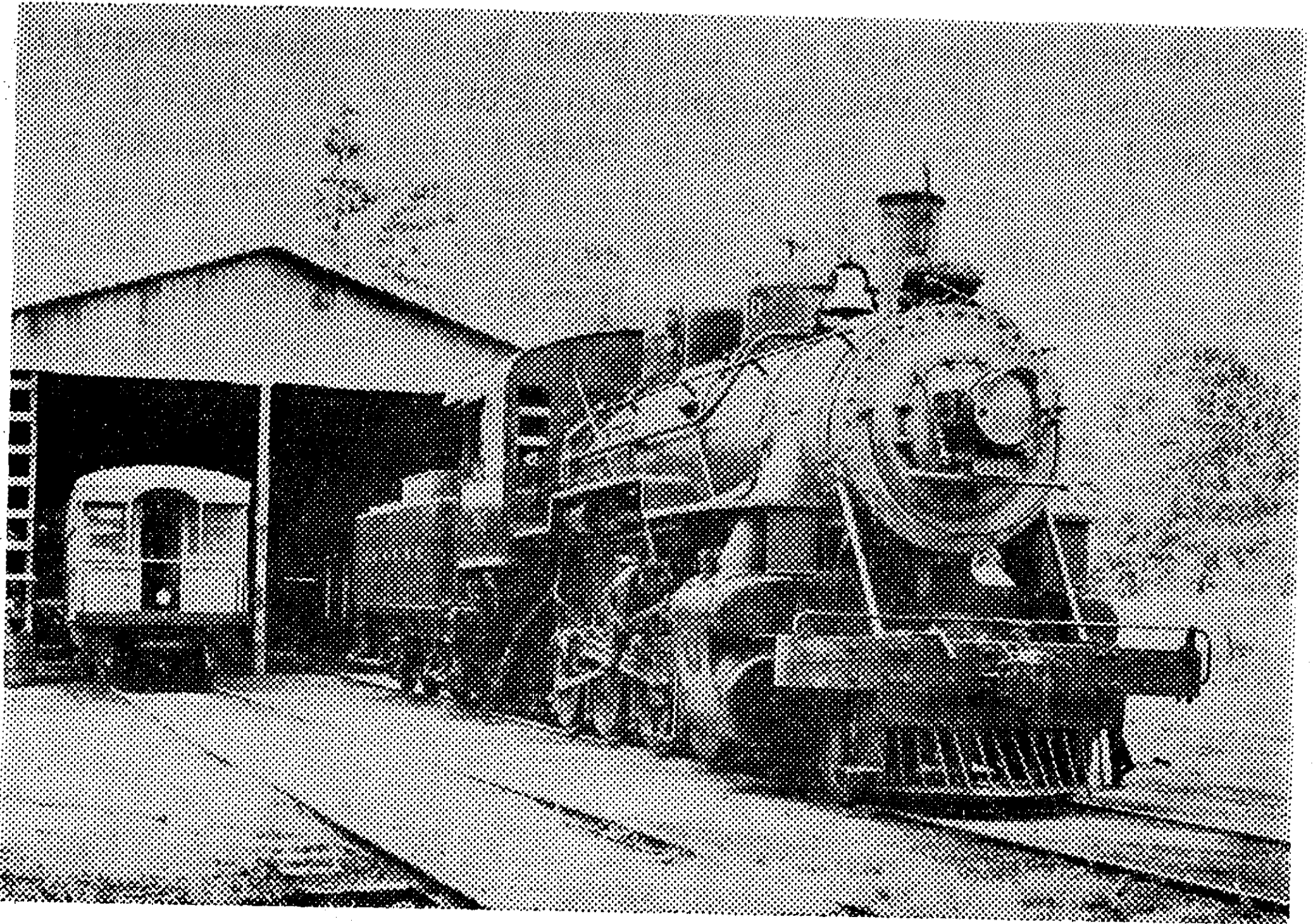
On the rest of the B&SE ridership was scanty. Passenger service to Eclectic, of course, ended first, probably in advance of the cessation of freight service on that end of the railroad. However, some time before abandonment of the Union Springs end, its passenger service was apparently discontinued as well. The combine (coach-baggage car) trailing behind a string of freight cars made the daily train a mixed train, in railroad parlance; and the presence of the combine was the only admission that there might even *be* riders. In the later years there weren't; the car carried only mail and small freight and express shipments.

All passenger service came to an official and formal halt on the B&SE in 1955. The Public Service Commission on May 12 agreed that an average of ninety-three riders per month was no longer sufficient reason to run regular passenger trains.³⁰ The Western and the B&SE subsequently asked permission to discontinue the little-needed station at Milstead. At first, on

²⁸Specification and plan sheet for gas rail car 11. Central of Georgia Railway Company, November 23, 1935. Document accompanied letter, W. H. Mims, Superintendent, Motive Power and Equipment, Central of Georgia Railway, to Michael Dunn, February 14, 1963.

²⁹Interviews, Colonel Roberts Blount with Michael Dunn, January and June, 1963.

³⁰Minutes, Public Service Commission, XXIV, 6-7. Docket 13896.



Photograph by Michael Dunn

Last steam locomotive of B & SERR was 200, built in 1926, replaced by diesels in 1953, formally retired in 1955, sold in 1963 but not shipped until mid-1964 to new owner, Vermont Railway.

August 1, 1955, the Public Service Commission denied authority for this change,³¹ but the presence of only the weed-grown foundation of the long dismantled station building at Milstead is vivid proof that the lines' persistence in seeking discontinuance of the agency finally paid off.

On April 24, 1964 the Postal Service terminated mail handling by the B&SE, one more hard bump for the Bump & Slide Easy. Between 1955 and 1964 the company ran three mail trains to Milstead every day but Sunday. There the mail sacks were tossed off the speeding streamliners or picked up on the fly as the streamliners of the Western streaked through with hardly a slackening of speed. There was no direct road connection between Tallassee and the mainline railroad which carried the mail, until in 1964 a highway bridge was completed across the

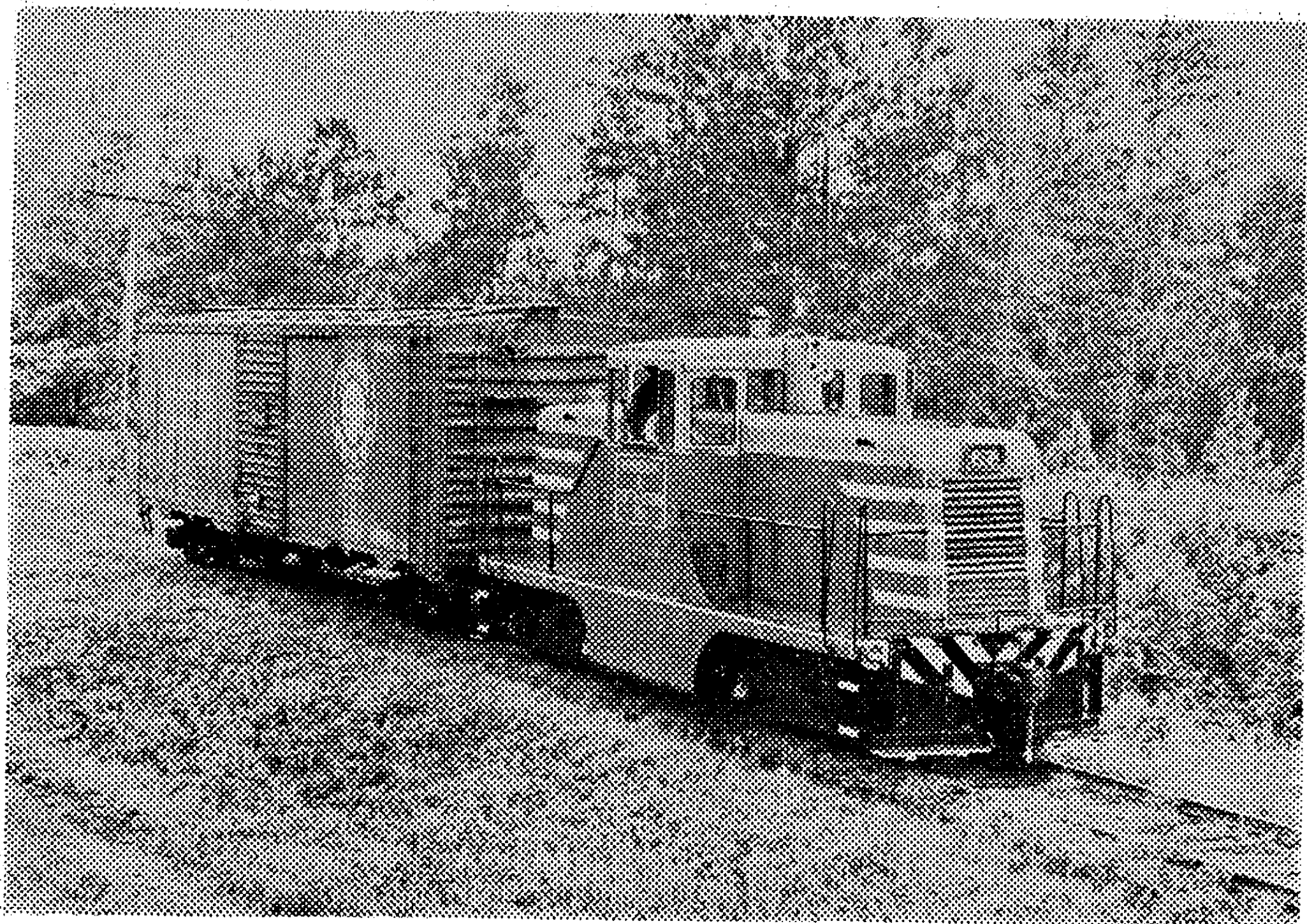
³¹Minutes, Public Service Commission, XXIV, 54-55. Docket 13881.

Tallapoosa, subjecting the mail train to the threat—eventually successful—of highway competition. Four or five days a week the mail would ride the freight train's locomotive instead of a motor car on the third scheduled run of the day. The motor car, and after January 10 its little section-car substitute, handled the morning and noon-time mail runs in addition to evening runs on days no freight worked the line. The 500 was an appealing sight as it waited for the Western train; painted red and yellow, it brightened the sombre surroundings created when the station at Milstead was razed. It was probably the last doo-dlebug in regular scheduled operation east of the Mississippi or even the Rockies. Until last April and cancellation of the mail contract, B&SE was most likely the smallest line haul railroad in the nation still holding a mail contract.

Two steam locomotives survived in B&SE service into the 1950s; five were on the books in 1929, four in 1935.³² One of the final pair of engines had come to the B&SE brand new in 1926, somehow diverted from its originally planned destination on a Latin American rail line. This was the 200, an eight-drivered Consolidation type. It boasted a headlight the size of a bushel basket, or thus at least it seemed. The bigger engine was the 227, a six-drivered Ten-Wheeler type (a four wheel pony truck accounted for the other four wheels named in the type). Built in 1903, this ninety-ton heavyweight outweighed the 200 by thirty-five tons, and had seen prior use by the Atlanta & West Point and the Western. The 227 was retired in 1953. In January vandals tampered with a switch, sending the 227 down the wrong track when it came switching at the Standard Oil terminal; instead it was sent down the spur of a concrete plant and ran off the end.³³ The shock sundered all water and air lines between engine and tender and the boiler was burned through for lack of water. As its engineer and another crewman nursed broken limbs, the engine was jacked up, a track built beneath her and she was hauled out, only to be cut up for scrap not long after the January 27 tragedy. Idled by a

³²Equipment and depreciation records of B&SERR, at the office in Tallassee. Reference is here made especially to depreciation statement of December 31, 1935.

³³The Tallassee Tribune, January 29, 1953.



Photograph by Michael Dunn

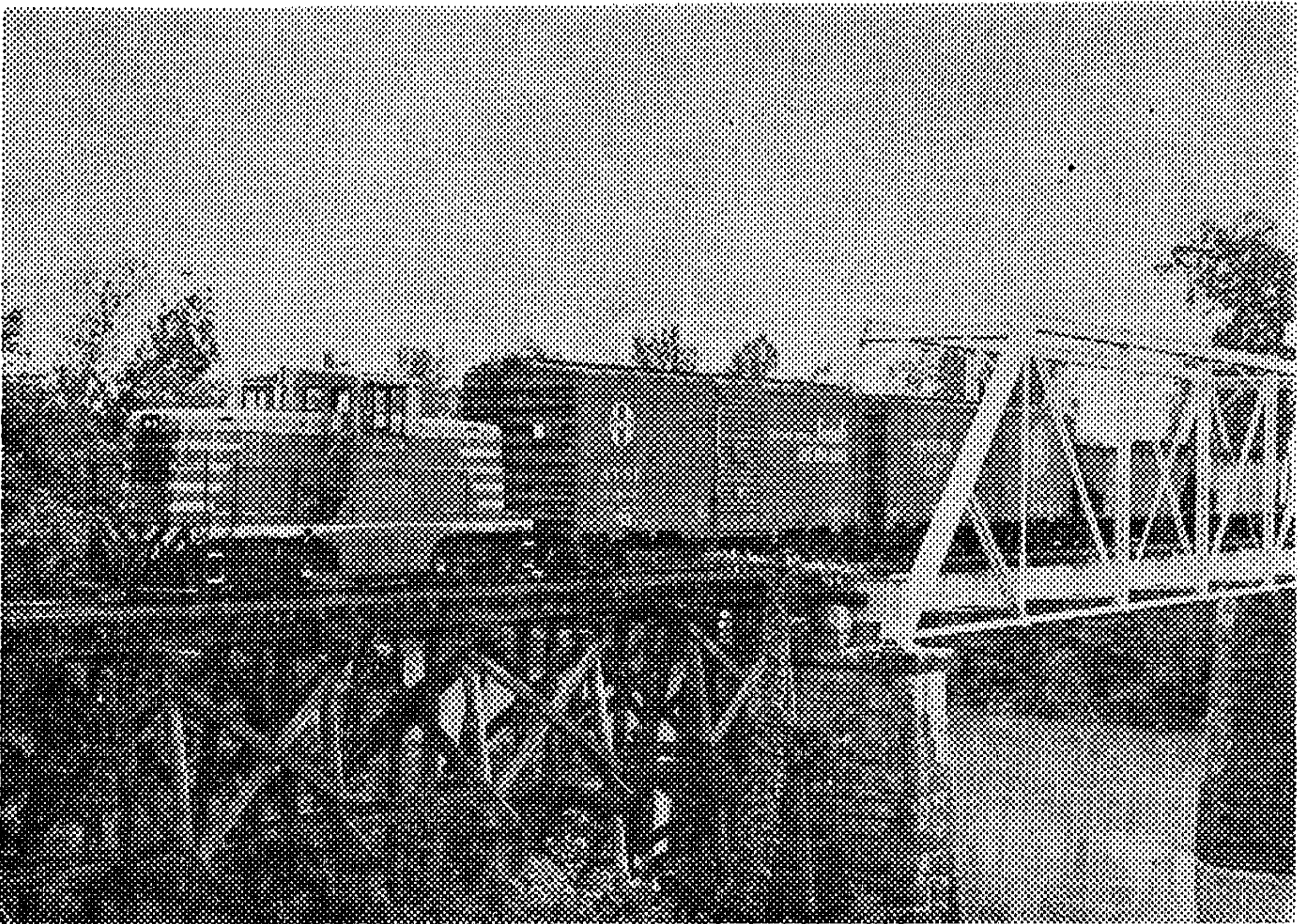
Mainstay of the Birmingham & Southeastern Railroad is General Electric diesel unit 199, the "Tecumseh," built and put into service in 1953 and shown near the Tallassee shops.

diesel in May, 1953, the 200 has met a much happier fate; though never fired up again for use after the months in early 1953 when she handled all the freight of the railroad, she was stored serviceable, even after formally being retired in 1955. During the summer of 1964, she was shipped off to the Vermont Railway, where in October this writer saw her being prepared for a new career hauling happy railroad buffs.

The Tecumseh was put into service after well-attended ribbon-cutting and christening ceremonies and a speech by Colonel Blount, a genial patriarch still obviously in love with his railroad. May 18, 1953 was the date when all operations but the rail bus runs were dieselized in one fell swoop.³⁴

The Tecumseh (number 199 on the roster) was a General

³⁴The Tallassee Tribune, May 21, 1953.



Photograph by Michael Dunn

Engine 199 leads a long string of freight cars across the Tallapoosa River bridge near Milstead, on a cloudy late June afternoon in 1963.

Electric product, weighing forty-four tons. Its light weight minimized strain on track and bridges but was still adequate for pulling fairly long trains over level trackage like that between Milstead and the Tallassee yard limits. For standby use another General Electric diesel was acquired in 1960, a forty-five ton government surplus engine that was soon repainted in the familiar B&SE color scheme, red and yellow, with silver lettering. Engines 198 and 199 and motor car 500 were immaculately groomed and meticulously maintained. Evident everywhere on the B&SE were signs of traditional pride and care, and touches of ingenuity that enabled the B&SE to survive on a shoestring during the last lean years. One old coach had been converted to a weedburning car. The last boxcar used in the B&SE's local service had been turned into a shed to house section motor cars and tools; the end of the car was cut out and hinged to create a huge doorway and the cars could roll right in. In the shop office the men would lunch on a salvaged couch.

Economies like dieselization and the substitute mail car, ingenuity like the weedburner and section shed, and even a change in management in 1963 were not enough to counteract a long downtrend in revenues on the B&SE. This downtrend began turning profits into losses in 1960. By July of 1964, the company's cash position had become so precarious that all the cash it had available, unallocated, was seventeen dollars.³⁵

After taking a long, hard look at the situation, the shareholders and directors met on September 29, 1964 in the saddest meetings the B&SE corporate family was ever to know. There both groups formalized their decision to abandon the doughty little railroad.³⁶ Accordingly, on October 19 the B&SE petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission for authority to abandon its entire railroad, 7.95 miles of main line and 3.51 miles of way switching tracks and sidings.

A pile of documents three-eighths of an inch high (plus many duplicate sets) was filed with the ICC. It told the story of the decline. How losses began with \$2,021.24 in 1960, and grew in one short year to \$13,734.55 and in two more to almost double that: \$25,109.99 for 1963.³⁷ How sixty-two truck lines afforded actual or potential competition. How valued shipments to Standard Oil Company vanished between 1962 and 1964. How too many other users were in the same class as a local broom works and an appliance dealer; their rail receipts over the previous thirty-one months were one car of straw and one car of appliances, respectively; their shipments, nil.³⁸

There were no prospects of increased traffic either to provide a profit or even to meet expenses. In fact, continued opera-

³⁵Application of the Birmingham and Southeastern Railroad Company for authority to abandon its line of railroad . . . , dated October 19, 1964, and filed by the Interstate Commerce Commission, October 22, 1964, 2. ICC assigned docket number 23348 to the B&SE case. Documents in the abandonment case docket include Application, Return to Questionnaire, Exhibits, and Certificate and Order. References hereinafter will cite only the appropriate portion and the docket number.

³⁶Finance Docket 23348, Application, 4.

³⁷Finance Docket 23348, Return to Questionnaire, 19, and Exhibit B, unpagged. (Exhibit B consists of twenty sheets, unpagged, of income accounts and balance sheets for years 1959 through 1963).

³⁸Finance Docket 23348, Return to Questionnaire, 7-14.

tion would only create more losses, result in unsafe operating conditions, and exhaust the assets of the company, chief of which was its land and physical plant. The railroad property had an estimated salvage value of \$191,106.49.³⁹

There were no possibilities of disposing of the railroad to another operator, either. The City of Tallassee was not interested.⁴⁰ The mill company was approached too, before the formal decision to abandon. In a letter dated August 18, 1964, the head of the textile firm officially stated his company's position to Col. Blount: "Mount Vernon Mills, Inc., has no interest in the purchase of the Birmingham & Southeastern Railroad as we are firmly of the belief that this company should not operate a railroad or own one."⁴¹

On January 4, 1965, Finance Board Number 3 of the ICC acted favorably on the B&SE petition, agreeing that public convenience and necessity no longer required the operation of the little railroad to Tallassee, and authorizing its abandonment.⁴²

Business seemed to pick up a wee bit during the final weeks, despite the fact that the Western had an embargo published almost a month before the little line actually quit. Embargo notices are issued daily by the Car Service Division of the Association of American Railroads. In its advisory to the Division, dated January 25, the Western gave the effective date as February 5, embargoing all items that could not be delivered by midnight of that date. The B&SE actually quit at the close of March 5 business day. Soon afterward its management fulfilled the final ICC requirement by filing in duplicate the journal entries showing that the line had been abandoned as of March 10 and all tariffs canceled.⁴³

March 5 saw the last revenue train over the B&SE, and a

³⁹Finance Docket 23348, Return to Questionnaire, 3-4, and Exhibit C.

⁴⁰Finance Docket 23348, Return to Questionnaire, 19, and Exhibit G.

⁴¹Letters, Thomas M. Bancroft to Roberts Blount, August 18, 1964, included as Finance Docket 23348, Exhibit F.

⁴²Finance Docket 23348, Certificate and Order, 1. Service date of the order was January 15, 1965.

⁴³**The Tallassee Tribune**, March 11, 1965. Letter, Thaddeus W. Forbes, Director, ICC Bureau of Finance, to Michael Dunn, April 15, 1965.

rather long one, at that. Symbolically its consist included eight empty boxcars and only one load. The distinction of carrying the last rail shipment out of Tallassee fell to Rock Island boxcar 27504, destined for New Haven and laden with cotton piece goods.⁴⁴

After leaving the last cars at the Milstead interchange, the diesel returned home alone across Tuckabatchie plain, the sound of Tecumseh's horn now destined to join the voice of an earlier Tecumseh as one of the ghost voices of the distant past.

⁴⁴As far as can be determined, no fanfare or special attention marked the final run of the B&SE. The author is indebted to Mr. W. L. Hammond for the report on final cars handled by the B&SE. Mr. Hammond is agent of the Western Railway of Alabama at Chehaw, the station that controlled the WRA-B&SE interchange at Milstead.

MOBILE AND THE VISIT BY WOODROW WILSON

by Derrel Roberts

In 1913, the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, paid a formal visit to Mobile. Since this trip came during Wilson's drive for his domestic program, the New Freedom, most of the speculation on the subject of the President's speech indicated that he would probably talk about farm problems. As it turned out, he delivered a major foreign policy speech, which some diplomatic historians say, ushered in a new era in our Latin American relations.

The reasons for the gathering, as well as why Mobile was chosen as the site, were numerous. For one, the Southern Commercial Congress scheduled its 1913 meeting for Mobile and invited the President to speak. The Southern Commercial Congress was described as more than a convention. "It is a mighty movement for the commercial upbuilding of this Southern country," the *Mobile Register* announced.¹ The slogan of the organization was "For a greater nation through a greater South." The organization had permanent headquarters in the Southern Building in Washington, D.C. Senator Duncan U. Fletcher of Florida was president of the Congress. He also served as Chairman of the Permanent American Commission on Agricultural Cooperation, made up of agricultural and Congressional leaders in the United States. This group toured Europe just prior to the Mobile meeting, where they studied agricultural methods and production. Dr. Clarence J. Owens, a native of Maryland, was director General of the Southern Commercial Congress and was also connected with the Commission on Agricultural Cooperation.²

The opening of the Panama Canal was one of the reasons given for the time and place of the meeting of the Southern Commercial Congress. Consequently, the Pan-American Union Director General, John Barrett, announced that the Union would also participate in the Mobile celebration. A large dele-

¹Mobile *Register*, September 25, 1913.

²*Ibid.*, October 26, 1913.

gation of "notable statesmen" from the Latin American states were invited through the Pan-American Union.³

Alabama was even more directly involved in that the late John Tyler Morgan, Senator from Alabama, was given a great deal of credit for the acquisition of the Panama Canal. Senator Morgan, born in Tennessee in 1824, eventually settled in Selma, Alabama, where he practiced law. In the Confederate Army between 1861 and 1865 he rose from the rank of private to brigadier general. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1876 and served there until his death in 1907.⁴

How much credit is really due Senator Morgan for the acquisition of the Panama Canal is another question. He was described as the "leading champion in Congress of the Nicaraguan route." He was recognized as a canal expert and chairman of a canal committee despite the fact that he was a Democrat in a Republican dominated Senate. But the ratification of the Hay and Bunau-Varilla Treaty in February, 1904 was described as a defeat for Morgan as he led a "vigorous opposition."⁵

Even so, the Mobile newspaper claimed major credit for Morgan to the extent that there would have been no canal without him. He kept the idea alive and before the Senate and the people, according to the paper.⁶ So special memorial services were planned for Morgan. A daughter, Cornelia Morgan, was invited as an honored guest of the Women's Auxiliary of the Southern Commercial Congress.⁷ Further, Professor Paul C. Boudousquie of Spring Hill College painted a portrait of the late Senator for the occasion. The oil painting was described as life size, half figure and an excellent likeness.⁸

Further claims for Alabama's part in the Panama Canal were made by the newspaper. Mobile born William Gorgas' work

³*Ibid.*, September 25, 1913.

⁴*Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1949* (Washington, 1950), 15-87.

⁵Julius W. Pratt, *A History of United States Foreign Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955), 400, 402n., 408.

⁶*Mobile Register*, October 19, 1913.

⁷*Ibid.*, October 15, 1913.

⁸*Ibid.*, September 30, 1913.

when disease struck saved the day in Panama. Alabamians like Colonel William L. Sibert among others aided Colonel George W. Goethals, while Goethals' early engineering experience came in his work on the Alabama and Tennessee River in northern Alabama. The school child who wrote the best essay on the subject "Alabama did it," would be allowed to sit on the platform with the President of the United States.⁹

An air of excitement settled on Mobile when on September 23d, news came that President Wilson was "definitely coming."¹⁰ This time there was no "ifs" attached and for only the second time in history, a President of the United States was visiting Mobile during his presidency.¹¹ In honor of the occasion and the President, the Mobile Chamber of Commerce provided a gold medalion for Wilson as a memento. On one side was a picture of the late Senator Morgan and on the other side was a replica of the topography of the Panama Canal. There were silver copies for cabinet members scheduled to appear and bronze ones on sale in a local jewelry store.¹²

The week before the celebration, Wilson sent what was described as a "laconic" telegram regarding the program. He had been given the plan for the event and he responded with the telegram: "Suggested Program entirely satisfactory."¹³

Meanwhile, pressure was exerted to have the President take part in programs along the way from Washington to Mobile. These attempts were futile, though, as the President's office announced that the press of affairs limited his speaking engagements to the dedication of the restored Congress Hall in Philadelphia on October 25th and the Mobile event on October 27th.

⁹*Ibid.*, October 19, 1913.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, September 24, 1913.

¹¹*Ibid.*, October 26, 1913, President Theodore Roosevelt visited Mobile in 1908.

¹²*Ibid.*, October 17, 1913. Bronze copies were on sale at E. O. Zadek Jewelry Co., Cabinet members scheduled to appear were Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan and Secretary of Navy Josephus Daniels.

¹³*Ibid.*, October 21, 1913.

The limiting force, in this case, was the unsteady situation in Mexico.¹⁴

The most obvious participants were those attending the Southern Commercial Congress, the Pan-American Union delegates, Mobile Chamber of Commerce members, but there were several other groups. The Chamber of Commerce was given major responsibility for entertaining the President's Cabinet and raising funds for the event. The 240 member delegation of the Chamber of Commerce planned a rather elaborate dinner at the "Cawthon Vineyard" for Secretaries Bryan and Daniels. As it turned out, Daniels attended; Bryan remained in Washington because of the Mexican crisis.¹⁵

Among others participating were all the Mobile fraternal orders and lodges. Also included were women's auxiliary groups of various organizations. When a group from Biloxi, Mississippi, applied for a train to Mobile, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad refused the request. Not to be outdone, the Mississippians made plans to travel to Mobile by boat.¹⁶ Meanwhile, a New Orleans editor was impressed with the significance of the event and expressed the hope that many from New Orleans would attend and continue the "neighborly spirit" between the two cities. After all, he said, the opening of the Panama Canal would help New Orleans most and it was already "the greatest city in the South. . . ."¹⁷

As usual, the most difficult task proved to be fund raising. The first financial drive, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, was in the form of a canvass late in September. Over one hundred canvassers participated, carrying pamphlets that explained how the money would be spent.¹⁸ Then early in October,

¹⁴*Ibid.*, October 23, 1913. In Mexico, General Huerta replaced Madero after he was brutally murdered by pro-Huerta forces. Most Europeans immediately granted diplomatic recognition to the Huerta government but Wilson refused recognition on a moral basis.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, October 17, 22, 23, and 24, 1913. The usual captions on the news items ran "Will Bryan Come?"

¹⁶*Ibid.*, October 5, 19, 20, and 23, 1913.

¹⁷From the *New Orleans States* reprinted in the *Mobile Register*, October 20, 1913.

¹⁸*Mobile Register*, September 30, 1913.

various fraternal orders combined and staged a musical depicting the development of the United States and Mobile.¹⁹ Toward the end of the drive, school children were allowed to volunteer to sell special buttons for the occasion. The week-end before the arrival of the President was set aside for the sale of the buttons. Meanwhile, the ladies of the Business Women's Club announced that they would sell "lunches and meals" on October 27 and that the proceeds would go, not to finance the event, but to build a clubhouse "across the bay."²⁰

During the financial campaign, there were some interesting comments regarding the contributors. The four railroads serving Mobile contributed from \$250 to \$1,000 each. Even so, after the first canvass, \$12,000 was collected and an estimated \$18,000 more was needed. Chamber of Commerce President William Ambrecht made some observations about the drive to the press. "It struck me . . .," he said, "that the men of small means were the ones who had given the most." "The proprietors of fruit and peanut stands have given \$25 in some instances," he observed, "and the big merchants have not contributed proportionately. One of the big firms which gives \$50 annually to the Mardi Gras gave \$20 to this event. Large property owners are conspicuous by their absence," Ambrecht concluded. Three days before the celebration, the drive was only \$2,000 short of its goal.²¹

There was another drive to provide rooms in private homes for visitors and still another to stir the excitement of the people. To boost the importance of the celebration, Chamber of Commerce President Ambrecht asked the question: "Do the people of Mobile appreciate the honor conferred upon them by the chief executive?" The editor of the paper, in a burst of enthusiasm, advised the people that it was "time to put our best foot foremost." "Clean up the city, fling the colors to the breeze, and put your shoulders to the wheel," he wrote.²²

¹⁹Ibid., October 6, 1913.

²⁰Ibid., October 17 and 23, 1913.

²¹Ibid., October 8, 9, 12 and 24, 1913.

²²Ibid., October 20, 23 and 24, 1913.

Among the events scheduled for the hours preceeding the President's speech, were memorial services for Senator Morgan in various churches of the city, with notable speakers and performances by the local "Morgan Memorial Chorus" of nearly 1,100 voices. In addition, there was a water revue to be viewed by the President with the public. Two revenue cutters and three government lighthouse tenders were provided for the occasion and private boat and shipowners were invited to decorate and participate.²³

Otherwise, the most important events of the day was the Presidential breakfast, the parade and of course, the President's speech. The President's schedule was filled, then, from the time he arose at 7:00 A.M. until he left Mobile at 12:53 P.M.²⁴ The Presidential Breakfast at the Battle House was formal and the dress for the occasion was rather rigidly prescribed for those attending. The imposed dress was a "Prince Albert coat or a black cut-a-way coat" with trousers of a "light grey or a stripe." Under some circumstances, those in business suits were allowed to meet the President, but they could not attend the breakfast.²⁵ The Breakfast Committee of the Chamber of Commerce arranged the affair for the Auditorium of the Battle House. . . ." The charge was seven dollars per plate, but those purchasing tickets were reminded that the assessment

²³*Ibid.*, October 18, 21 and 23, 1913. Among speakers were Governor Park Trammell of Florida, Governor Elliot W. Major of Missouri and John Temple Graves.

²⁴The President's schedule:

3:30 A.M. Arrive at Louisville and Nashville Depot.

7:00 A.M. Arises.

7:30 A.M. Leaves private railroad car for Presidential breakfast.

7:45 A.M. Meets distinguished guests.

8:00 A.M. Presidential breakfast.

10:00 A.M. Presidential address at Lyric Theater.

11:15 A.M. Presidential parade.

12:15 P.M. Address to public from reviewing stand on St. Joseph Street.

12:53 P.M. Leaves Mobile on Louisville & Nashville Railroad.

From the Mobile **Register**, October 27, 1913.

²⁵MS, From R. V. Taylor and Harry T. Hartwell to Leon Schwarz, October 15, 1913, in the Leon Schwarz Scrap Book Number 2, in the Special Collections at the Mobile Public Library, Page 196. See also pages 197 and 198.

covered "the cost of complimentary plates to some sixty national and international guests of honor."²⁶ The menu emphasized Mobile as much as possible with "Mobile Grape Fruit," "Mobile Corn Pones," and of course "Fried Hominy Grits" among other delicacies.²⁷

The President's address was the featured speech before the Southern Commercial Congress in the Lyric Theater.²⁸ The security and safety of the President was planned with care by local officials with the Presidential party. A close guard was furnished the President all morning and the Mobile police had a special order: "No messages, bouquets or anything to be delivered to the President will be taken by officers but must be given to the official courier."²⁹

Early speculation from Washington on the subject of Wilson's address proved to be inaccurate. Early in October, word came from the Capitol that the topic would be "Rural Credits." After all, Dr. C. J. Owens, the Director of the Southern Commercial Congress had studied the problem in Europe and the President took the time to inform himself on the subject. Then too, the financial revision bills which led to the Federal Reserve System were before the Congress and were related.³⁰

There was never any official announcement of topic from Wilson and, therefore, no change announced. Even so, the October 25th headline in the *Mobile Register* might have given a clue. It read: "MEXICAN CRISIS REACHED; WILSON PREPARES TO WARN POWERS OFF." The article told of meetings by the President and Cabinet members and others to decide on a course of action. It was in this international climate that Wilson came to Mobile.³¹

²⁶From O. B. Fowkes to Leon Schwarz, October 21, 1913 in the Schwarz Scrap Book, 197.

²⁷A Menu for the occasion in the Schwarz Scrap Book, 198. The Menu included Compote of Fruit, Mobile Grape Fruit, Apollinaris, Blanket Pompano a la Daniels, Broiled Squab on Toast with Bacon, Fried Hominy Grits, Mobile Corn Pones, Hot Rolls, Coffee, Tea, Milk.

²⁸For programs and highlights of the whole affair, see the Schwarz Scrap Book Number 2, 196-199.

²⁹*Mobile Register*, October 26, 1913.

³⁰*Ibid.*, October 8 and 14, 1913.

³¹*Ibid.*, October 25, 1913.

Several passages from the Wilson speech have been quoted many times. More important passages from the address were selected by a Mobile editor and placed in a front page box. He quoted Wilson:

This is not America because it is rich. This is not America because it has set up for a great population great opportunities of material prosperity. America is a name that sounds in the ears of men everywhere as a synonym with individual opportunity, because it is a synonym of individual liberty.

I would rather belong to a poor nation that was free than to a rich nation that had ceased to be in love with liberty. But we shall not be poor if we love liberty, because the nation that loves liberty truly sets every man to do his best and be his best, and that means the release of all the splendid energies of a great people who think for themselves.

We dare not turn from the principle that morality and not expediency is the thing that must guide us, and that we will never condone iniquity because it is convenient to do so.³²

But the editor left out of his box the most often quoted passage that brought a new view of the Monroe Doctrine. Wilson said, "I want to take this occasion to say that the United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest." Even so, the editor was of the opinion that the Wilson address ushered in a "Second Monroe Doctrine." "Few men," the editor thought, "could have touched so delicately yet so firmly upon the bleeding sore of the Mexican situation as Mr. Wilson did; for he never mentioned Mexico by name nor yet by indirection; he spoke to all Latin America, and whenever his words do lodge there they will have their just application and fruit."³³

³²These excerpts are from the *Mobile Register*, October 28, 1913. The full text of the speech is also there as well as in Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Documents of American History*, Sixth edition (New York, 1958), 269-70. See also *President Wilson's Great Speeches and Other History Making Documents* (Chicago, 1918), 283-84.

³³*Mobile Register*, October 28, 29, 1913.

In mid-November, the United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Walter Hines Page, wrote from London to President Wilson's close friend and advisor, Colonel Edward M. House, that "anybody concerned here understands the language that the President speaks now." "You mustn't forget," Page reminded House, "that in all previous experience in Latin America we ourselves have been as much to blame as anybody else." "Now we have a clear road to travel," he concluded, "a policy based on character to follow forever—a new era."³⁴

Modern historians vary in their opinion of Wilson's speech. A prominent biographer refers to this "famous speech" as one that assured the "Mexicans that in the campaign he was about to undertake against Huerta he would avoid intervention that carried with it acquisition of territory and would seek only to make possible the development of constitutional government in Mexico." The biographer thinks that the meaning of Wilson's address is more evident if the word "Mexico" is inserted in place of "Latin America," and "Great Britain" for "foreign interests."³⁵ By other authors it is described as a vigorous expression of the "ideals" of Wilson's "new policy."³⁶

"The reality, however, often fell short of the ideal," writes still another present-day diplomatic historian. He thinks that while the policies and motives of Wilson and Bryan were high, "politics and economics persistently intrude in the determination of policy."³⁷ Then Dexter Perkins, a well known authority on the Monroe Doctrine says that the pronouncements in the Wilson speech "undoubtedly produced a favorable impression. . . ." He points out, though, that President William Howard Taft's Secretary of State, Philander C. Knox, made a similar speech in 1912.³⁸

³⁴Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, I, (London, 1923), 210.

³⁵Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era* (New York, 1954), 118.

³⁶Nelson Manfred Blake and Oscar Theodore Barck, Jr., *The United States in its World Relations* (New York, 1960), 471-72.

³⁷Foster Rhea Dulles, *America's Rise to World Power, 1898-1954* (New York, 1954), 88-89.

³⁸Dexter Perkins, *A History of the Monroe Doctrine* (Boston, 1955), 322.

Even if it had been said before, it was not announced as policy, by the president, in the midst of a serious crisis as was the case of the Wilson address. Too, while Wilson did intervene in Vera Cruz, Mexico to keep a German ship from unloading war equipment, later, he agreed to arbitration of the United States-Mexican problem by Argentina, Brazil and Chile. This surprised most people, including the Mexican dictator, Huerta, who refused to arbitrate and was soon overthrown by an internal revolt led by Carranza. The *New York Times*, when the crisis ended, announced that the "wisdom of the President has . . . been clearly proven. . . ." "The outlook is hopeful," the editor wrote. " 'Watchful waiting,' the joke of the shallow minded, had had its reward."³⁹

Further, there were, possibly, more long range affects. Franklin D. Roosevelt was then Wilson's impressionable young Assistant Secretary of the Navy and much involved in Latin American affairs. When he became President in 1933, he had this background as well as the Clark Memorandum and the work of Dwight L. Morrow on which to base his "Good Neighbor" policy with Latin America.

While Wilson's speech had an impact on foreign relations, some Mobilians thought it affected the weather. The *Register* editor felt that a popular song title was appropriate for the day: "All the World seems brighter since we first met you." "The skies cleared," he wrote, "as the policy of the United States was made clear by the President on yesterday, and a faultless day followed."⁴⁰

President Wilson enjoyed the trip to Mobile as he rarely enjoyed trips before, he told friends.⁴¹ Then in December, 1913 and January, 1914, he came back to the Gulf Coast for a three week stay at the "Dixie White House" as Pass Christian, Mississippi.⁴²

³⁹New York **Times**, July 17, 1914.

⁴⁰Mobile **Register**, October 28, 1913.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, October 29, 1913.

⁴²Ray Thompson, "The Dixie White House," in **Down South**, XIV (May-June, 1964), 5 and 21.

A HOOSIER REGIMENT IN ALABAMA

by Arville L. Funk

In July of 1864, General Joseph E. Johnston's Confederate Army of Tennessee was desperately engaged in the great Battle of Atlanta with General Sherman's Union forces. On the 17th of that month, Johnston was removed from command of the army and General John B. Hood was named to replace him. After Hood had led his new command in the severe fighting at Peach Tree Creek and Ezra Church, the Atlanta struggle settled down to a siege that was to last until the first of September. On September 2nd, General Sherman's victorious troops occupied Atlanta and Hood's Confederate force began a retreat into the mountain section of northwestern Georgia.

Hood had initially planned to attack Sherman's supply and communication lines in the mountain section, but had to change his strategy when Wheeler's Cavalry reported that the Union army was concentrated too strongly for any major attacks. Hood then retreated west into Alabama, moving toward a rendezvous with the new Confederate commander in the West, General G. T. Beauregard. The rendezvous occurred at the city of Gadsden on October 20th.

About the same date, certain elements of the Union Army of The Cumberland, including the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, Fourteenth Army Corps, were sent into northeastern Alabama in pursuit of Hood's army. Serving in this brigade was the 38th Indiana Veteran Volunteer Infantry Regiment, commanded by Lt. Colonel Daniel F. Griffin. The 38th Indiana had participated in all of the campaigns of the Army of The Cumberland from Perrysville to Atlanta, and after the activities mentioned in this letter, the regiment took part in Sherman's "March To The Sea."

The author of the following letter, Lt. Colonel Griffin, resigned his commission just two weeks after this letter was written. He returned to his home at New Albany, Indiana, where he died of typhoid fever in February of 1865.

Griffin's letter to his wife in New Albany, written from Gaylesville, gives a very interesting account of the regiment's activities in Alabama and interesting report of the impression of the area and its inhabitants. The original letter is printed preserving the original spelling and punctuation:

Gaylesville, Ala.

October 22, 1864

My dear Wife;

You will have to get your map or atlas and again commence the study of geography to ascertain my whereabouts; nor am I certain that this will give you the desired information, as we are now in the mountains, hid almost from the world; though I have no doubt but that the world is looking anxiously for and toward us.

Though near the mountains, we are in one of Alabama's richest valleys, living on the fat of the land; hogs, chickens, geese, ducks and sweet potatoes being our chief articles of diet. Orders are to forage and live partially off the country and the men do it with a will, I assure you. In fact, men and animals are living better than they have for a year, much to the disgust of the inhabitants; still, most of them have sense enough to say but little and think that had General Hood¹ staid away from here, we would have remained absent. However, I guess it is but right that these people should feel some of the hardships of war, they will better appreciate peace when it does come, and be not so ready to rush widely into the same vortex again.

Many a case of wanton destruction of property must or does occur, done by irresponsible foragers and worthless stragglers, which can not well be prevented in so large an Army. Orders are to protect the citizens in their private property and leave them enough to live on, until the next crop is made; which I trust may be peaceable harvested and housed without the fear of armies.

I wrote you last from Lafayette; can't remember the date;

¹Gen. John B. Hood, commanding Confederate Army of Tennessee.

since which time we have crossed Taylor's Ridge, coming down the Chattanooga River Valley to this point, our Cavalry harassing the enemy's rear. Here we have been for two days, the Army concentrated; and from indications will remain to-morrow, perhaps longer, though a move may be made at any moment, but in what direction, none but the powers that be, can guess.

Hood's Army, I cannot say where they are, but not close. They have studiously avoided a fight since their last thrashing at Allatoona,² and I doubt if we could come up with them even should we pursue farther. Reports say they are going to the Blue Mountains of Alabama, but from there whence, I cannot say. What I wish most for, is for the campaign to close soon and give us a chance to reorganize, and myself to go home to wife and boy.

Dr. Curry³ and Charley Van Dusen⁴ were mustered out yesterday, under the late Order allowing Officers who had served three years to be mustered out. They start for Rome tomorrow, thence to Atlanta and thence home. They seem to be superlatively happy, so goes the world.

But thus far I have forgotten to tell you of receipt of your welcome letter of the 9th. It came to hand this morning, the first mail since leaving Kingston. What a God-send it did seem to me, benighted citizen of this secluded valley.

Am glad Frank's whooping cough is not very bad and trust he may get well of it ere the bad weather sets in. I should like to see him traveling around the room in his peculiar style, happy in the innocence of his young heart and the smiles of his mother. I could almost envy him his enjoyment, but let us hope the time may not be far distant when I may be with you. Also I can appreciate your feelings and the goodness and patriotism of your warm heart, at feeling that whatever be my decision as to the time I remain, "it is but right." I trust the time will soon come that a happy country may repay you for

²Battle of Allatoona, (near present Cartersville, Ga.), Oct. 5, 1864.

³Dr. John Curry, Regimental Surgeon of 38th Ind.

⁴Capt. Charles Van Dusen, commanding Co. B, 38th Ind.

this disinterestedness and casting aside of selfishness.

Poor Gresham,⁵ what a time he must have and what suffering endure; and how much it must necessarily affect the happiness of Tillie. May his case speedily improve, is my most ardent wish.

I rather guess, could you see your husband in his top boots, old coat and dusty hat, you would be ordering me to the first tailor shop in the country. Not much old maid style, I can assure you. Carpenter⁶ is yet with me and well, but very anxious to get home. Don't know whether I shall ask him to stay much longer, unless I can see the close of the campaign is near at hand. He has been and is, very faithful. Guess I shall have to give him a pension in the way of drinks for at least during the War, on his return home.

Met Dr. Payne and Babbitt yesterday, both well. Dr. expects to go home as soon as the campaign closes, or as soon as he can close up his Accounts and Returns. He is now with the 1st Div. 17th A.C.

Have had the election returns from the State, they have come all right, only I think the 2nd District should be sliced off into Ky. or left out in the cold somewhere, for being the only one behind in the good work. Am now confident of Mr. Lincoln's reelection and think the country safe.

Convey my congratulations to high private Croxall; tell him to come here and I will make him a color bearer at once.

My regards to friends, and to all at home, love.

Ever your devoted husband,

Dan F. Griffin -

Lt. Col. 38th Ind. Vet. Vol.

⁵Maj. Gen. Walter Q. Gresham, wounded at Battle of Atlanta, (later Secy of State under President Cleveland).

⁶A freed Negro boy, personal servant of Lt. Col. Griffin.

A DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF BLOUNT COUNTY

By George Powell*

The thirty-fourth parallel of North latitude and the meridian of Huntsville, cross near the center of the county. At first, our county extended from the Cherokee line on the north-east to the present Tuscaloosa line on the south-west, and included Jefferson county, most of Walker, a large portion of Marshall, and some of Hancock; but as the country became more densely settled, it was proper to curtail Blount to its present dimensions.

The ridge which divides the waters of the Tennessee from the Warrior, runs through the county and divides it into two very unequal portions; the south part lying on the waters of the Black Warrior, being much the larger portion, and which originally formed part of the Creek nation: this part is sometimes called old Blount, to distinguish it from the smaller part, which was claimed by the Cherokees, and was obtained from them many years after Blount was organized.

The territory under consideration would average a little more than thirty miles square; but nature has divided it into six divisions: five of which run through the entire breadth of the county.

The first division is the long narrow elevated portion between the Raccoon and Pine Mountains, adjoining St. Clair county; the second, is Murphree's Valley; the third is the trough of the Locust Fork of Black Warrior; the fourth is Blountsville Valley; the fifth consists of coal measures west of the Blountsville Valley; the sixth is Brown's Valley.

*George Powell settled in Blount County in 1819 where he taught school and assisted in the original surveys of the region. For forty years he served as surveyor of Blount County. His study of geology and his private explorations of the mineral resources of the vicinity attracted

the attention of Prof. Michael Toumey, State Geologist who after 1848 cooperated with his in mineral surveys of Blount, Jefferson, Winston, Walker, Marion, Lawrence, and Franklin Counties.

"A History and Description of Blount County" was first published by the Alabama Historical Society in 1855. Because of its rarity, it is here reprinted in order both to make it more available generally and to stimulate interest in bringing the history up to date. The copy used for this purpose belonged to Alexander B. Meek and is now in the possession of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Details of the original printing are found in the reminiscences of Col. James M. Van Hoose ("The Alabama Historical Society—Reminiscences of Fifty Years," Transactions of the **Alabama Historical Society, 1899-1903**, Vol. IV, p. 120) in which he writes:

A "History of Blount County" came into my hands as secretary with the accompanying directions from the Society to edit and publish it. This manuscript "History" was by Mr. George Powell, of Blount County, and was written at the instance of the venerated Prof. Michael Toumey, professor of geology and mineralogy of the State University, and State geologist of Alabama. Mr. Powell had guided Prof. Toumey in his explorations of Blount, being thoroughly acquainted with the topography of the county. Prof. Toumey's clear discernment of "good metal" discovered that Mr. Powell was of valuable "grit" and laid him under contribution for our Society. The result was the "History of Blount County," a brochure of some thirty-five printed pages as published in the winter of 1855-56, by J. F. Warren, proprietor of the **Observer**, Tuscaloosa. This little historical pamphlet was unique as a model for such brief histories of our various counties as the Society so much desires. This and the address of Mr. [A. B.] Meek ["On Alabama History"] appeared in the **Transactions** of the Society for 1855.

An editor's note prefaced the original edition, and as it expresses our intent, it is appropriate to quote it at length.

It is due to the writer of the following pages, to say, that they were prepared by him amid duties of a very dissimilar kind, at the request of a member of the Historical Society, under the belief, that he was merely furnishing **material** to be wrought by another hand, into a more complete shape before publication. As, however, the main purpose of sending this abroad, is to furnish the friends and members of the Society, throughout the State, a general criterion, as to the **character of matter** which it is desirable to obtain from the different Counties, the Executive Committee have thought it would as well comport with their duties, and better effectuate their purpose, to publish it without changing, to any material extent, the original manuscript.

The first division is the most eastern and is about thirty miles long, and from three to five miles wide. This is a coal region and nearly all of it composed of mountains. It is in this narrow division that the Locust Fork has its main source, rising near the north-west corner of Township 13, Range 3, east, and running first ten or twelve miles north-east, it then turns to the left through a gap of the Pine Mountain into Murphree's Valley, which it crosses at right angles, then running through a gap in the main Sand Mountain and turning again to the left, keeps a south-west direction to Jefferson county.

The little Warrior rises near the main source of the Locust Fork, but flows exactly in an opposite direction eight or ten miles—then turns to the right through a gap in Pine Mountain—crosses Murphee's Valley near Crump's Cave, and unites with the Locust Fork at Yielding's Ferry, in Township 12, Range 1, west.

At the heads of these rivers, the land rises high, almost as high as the mountains that skirt this division, and the inhabitants have at this place constructed a road leading from Blountsville to Ashville. The coal beds that I have seen, are about two feet thick and of good quality; they are in the bottom of the main prong of the Locust Fork. The smiths haul coal from those beds for ten or twelve miles. It is said there is coal on the little Warrior in this division. The timber is oak, hickory and pine. Some good land lies on the streams—formerly covered with cane, large poplars, gums, beech, &c.

2nd. Murphree's Valley is about thirty miles long and three miles broad, reckoning from the top of the Straight or Pine Mountain on the east, to the top of the Sand Mountain on the west. The Red Mountain is between them, and its top is about one mile from the top of the Sand Mountain. This valley is a continuation of Jones' Valley. It must be kept in mind that all those mountains run parallel through the county, and much further—their direction being south-west. (See Tuomey's map of the State.) They are very even on their tops, having no abrupt prominences on them; but they have a few narrow gaps through which the waters find their way. The Red

Mountain is not so long as the others; it reaches from Five-mile Creek in Jefferson county to the head of Aurora Valley, formerly called Brister's Cove. This mountain is quite knobby.

Limestone is abundant in this valley, and extends rather more than half way up the precipitous sides of the Sand Mountains; then commences the sand-stone, which is succeeded by conglomerate. This valley was densely covered with tall timber, consisting of oaks, hickory, poplars, gums, beech, maple, elms, walnut, cherry, mulberry, &c., intermixed with vines and other small growth. Pine is rather scarce; cedar plentiful, on the limestone cliffs and the sides of the mountains. Good limestone water is plentiful.

3rd. This division is the trough of the Locust Fork of the Warrior. It is seven or eight miles wide at the north side of the county, but it gradually widens as it goes south, and becomes ten or twelve broad at the south-west side of the county. This trough lies parallel with Murphree's Valley, and is about the same length. All the waters of Murphree's Valley and part of the waters of Blountsville Valley, empty into the Locust Fork, which runs through this trough, not through the centre, but much nearer to Blountsville Valley. The small streams which flow from Blountsville Valley, are short and rapid, having about one hundred feet to fall before they reach the Locust Fork, which is seldom over two miles distant, and the streams from the north-west have their courses nearly at right angles with the river, while the streams which come from Murphree's Valley are much longer, and their general course forms a smaller angle with the river. In this division we have a great number of very ugly and dangerous bluffs or rocky cliffs. The rocks are millstone grit, sand-stone and slate; and there is besides some coal; but not a solitary piece of limestone can be found in this section of the county. Chalybeate springs are frequent, and what we call "licks," are common in this formation. "Licks" are places where deer and cattle resort for the purpose of licking and eating a kind of brackish clay, and are generally found in low and damp places. The timber is not so thick set nor so tall as the timber in the valleys, though pretty much of the same kind. We have more chestnut and pine, but less cedar, beech, maple and elm. On some of our rich

bottom lands, we even surpass the valleys in the size of our timber and the fertility of our soil.

4th. Blountsville Valley and Brown's Valley are really the same, they being bounded each side by the same unbroken chain of mountains; and all the difference between them is a low flat ridge or water shed that runs across the valley and divides the waters of the Warrior from those of the Tennessee. This ridge is so low, and on the south side the slope is so gradual, as not to be perceived by a traveller. If he is going to the north, he will be surprised by finding himself on the waters of the Tennessee, without knowing exactly when or where he crossed the main ridge.

What I call Blountsville Valley, includes only the part lying on the waters of the Warrior. This part is over twenty miles long and three or four wide—like Murphree's Valley, it has a continuous, but a lower mountain on each side. The middle ridge of this valley is higher than the mountains on either side, so that a spectator cannot see from one side of this valley to the other. In this respect, it differs from Murphree's Valley, which may be clearly seen across in most places; but like Murphree's Valley, the mountains that skirt it are composed of limestone from their bases half way to their tops, which are capped with sand-stone and millstone grit.

This valley is very hilly along its centre, and does not possess that regularity which is so apparent in Murphree's Valley; but the rocks and fossils are nearly the same—the timber also is similar. The creeks that run west, escape through gaps of the mountain and empty into the Mulberry Fork of the Warrior, which runs close to the west side of this mountain.

It is proper to observe that all those mountains which skirt the valleys have one precipitous side, which is invariably the side next the valley—the other side of each is invariably a long sandy slope. They are all nearly of the same height, being from four to five hundred feet high; in some places perhaps they rise to six hundred feet. In each gap, where rivers or creeks cut through them in leaving the valley, a mill is sure to be found in operation.

5th. This portion of the county is shaped somewhat like a three-cornered handkerchief, with the longest side joining the Blountsville Valley on the north-west. This is the loveliest part of our county; but the soil is sandy and generally poor. The timber is similar to the timber found in the trough of the Warrior. This portion is often called Brindlec's Colony. It is thinly settled, and has a pretty good grass range, with some wild game. The Mulberry Fork of the Warrior heads in this portion near the north-east corner of the county, and runs a south-west course. It keeps within two miles of the Blountsville Valley throughout the county. The longest streams that empty into the Mulberry Fork, come from the north, but they mostly dry up in the summer and fall. The constant streams that empty into it have their heads in the Blountsville Valley.

6th. The part sometimes called new Blount, is merely the southern part of Brown's Valley. It is about eight miles long, and four miles broad. Two creeks have their rise in this valley, viz: Gunter's Creek in the southeast, which flows north-east and empties into the Tennessee river at Guntersville; and Brown's Creek in the north-west, which empties into the Tennessee at Baird's Bluff. The streams entering either of these creeks are short and unimportant. The rocks, fossils and timber, are the same as those of Blountsville Valley. This is the only portion of the county having a north-ward exposure.

As to climate, little diversity could be expected to exist on so small an area, particularly if latitude were the only cause of variation. In Blount, however, other causes exert a greater influence on the temperature than latitude. Pretty much all of old Blount has a south-west exposure, which doubtless gives it a higher temperature than the latitude would otherwise indicate. And further, the coal measures on the Warriors have a sandy soil which would yet more augment the heat; and again these last named places have less elevation and lie farther south. All these causes help to increase the temperature of this part of the county.

Brown's Valley has a north-east exposure and a clay soil, and is the farthest north. These causes combined, render this valley the coldest, and doctors say, the healthiest part of Blount.

A gentleman who resides at Summit, and has for seven or eight years past been a practicing physician, not only in Brown's Valley, but in Blountsville Valley, and the coal measures, assures me, that he has four patients in the two last mentioned places, to one in Brown's Valley—the population being considered.

In the spring season vegetation commences along the southern sides of our long sandy mountains, and the leaves of the trees in such places are often half-grown before those in lower places have fairly burst their buds. The grass, also, on these warm sunny sides of the mountains is earlier, and the favorite resort for cattle in the spring season. In autumn, however, such places are the first to shed their foliage. The present spring, we had a late frost which killed all the young leaves and orchard fruit throughout the county, except such as were near the tops of the mountains. Similar frosts happened in 1829 and 1849.

That the tops of these long mountains covered densely with tall timber are cooler than the lower portions of the county, is very perceptible: for in hot weather, a person on reaching near their tops is sure to find himself in a cool delightful breeze. That their tops are colder in winter is also very perceptible: for when cold rains fall in the lower portions of the county, the timber on the mountains is often covered with ice, and the line of congelation is very perceptible.

I have long been of opinion that our long mountains, low as they are, do exert by their coolness a great influence on our summer rains. Certain it is, that after long droughts, the first rains that we have follow pretty much their summits. The following observation was made last summer: Business had kept me some weeks in the immediate vicinity of Warnock's Knob, which is the highest point of the mountain that skirts the south side of Blountsville Valley. A general and severe drought was beginning to be felt, and every body was watching anxiously for every appearance of rain. For several days, slight clouds passed and sometimes we received a few drops but not enough to do any good. One afternoon, we observed several little thin clouds which seemed to meet nearly

over the highest part of the knob, but did not appear of sufficient size to afford much rain. Appearances, however, were deceptive; it gave us a fine season on and around the knob, but the rain did not extend over one mile in any direction. Within a few days, the like was repeated at the same place. In all other places, as far as I could learn, the drought continued some weeks longer; but that whole line of mountains through the county had the first season. After which, the rains spread and became general.

Upon inquiry, I was informed that around that mountain a severe drought had never been known, though it had been settled thirty years.

It may be the cooling influence of our numerous, though low mountains, that has hitherto saved Blount from excessive droughts that some of our adjoining counties have suffered. If so, we should never clear our mountain tops of timber.

In the warm season, we have occasionally pretty severe thunder storms. They are narrow and seldom more than a few miles in length, and of uncertain direction. Extensive hurricanes pursue an eastward course—they rarely occur. We have breezes from every direction—those from the south-west are the most constant.

Before giving an account of the first settlement of our county, it will be proper to notice several obstacles in the way at that particular time—such as, how far had the immigrants to go—the difficulties to be overcome—and the prospect of provisions after arrival. All these things immigrants are sure to study before they set out. It will at once be seen by a glance at a map of the surrounding States, that the people of Madison County, Alabama, and the inhabitants of East Tennessee, had greatly the advantage in each of these respects.

The troops from Tennessee that invaded the Creeks in 1812, marched through Madison County, on their way to Baird's Bluff Deposit, and made a wagon road to that place (which is near the Blount County line;) but Gen. Coffee's mounted detachment continued up through Brown's Valley and

Blountsville Valley on its way against Old Town; and thus a great number of Tennesseans had an opportunity of seeing the country and learning the distance and the way—important information acquired.

Tennessee river afforded great facilities to all the eastern portion of Tennessee. The immigrants from that quarter could, by means of flat boats, bring not only their families, household and kitchen furniture, provisions and all kinds of stock, but even wagons and the teams to draw them. These boats could land at Gunter's or Deposit, and have a good way open to any part of Blount County.

The people of Madison County, who were the first to stop in Blount or Jefferson, emigrated along the old Huntsville road. This road was originally an Indian trace, leading from Ditto's Landing, to Mud Town, on the Cahawba.

At the time Blount was settling, we must recollect that the Cherokee Indians were the lords of all that portion of country lying between Wills Creek and the Chattahoochee river; so that the Georgians and the Carolinians had all that savage country to pass through, and generally over very bad roads; and when they crossed Wills Creek, and were fairly in Alabama Territory, they were only in St. Clair County and had yet to climb the Raccoon Mountain, from which they could indeed get a glimpse (not of the promised, but the desired land) of Blount.

From the above facts, it is easy to see from what quarter Blount was most likely to receive early immigrants. The United States acquired a right to the country in August, 1814, yet the whites were not permitted to take general possession until 1816, when a Mr. Jones, and his brother-in-law, Caleb Fryley, both of Madison County, were the first white men that settled permanently within our bounds. Mr. Jones located at Jonesborough, and gave his name to that village and to the valley in which it stands. Mr. Fryley located at "Bearmeat Cabin," now Blountsville. These two men in the fall of 1816, brought the first wagon into Blount County.

From 1816, the immigration was surprisingly rapid. The immigrants came from Madison, and in great numbers from Tennessee. They advanced along the old Indian trace, that led from Ditto's Landing to Mud Town, on the Cahawba. Every fertile spot near this road was settled in 1817. Great numbers of immigrants came down the Tennessee river in flat boats and landed at Deposit or Gunter's Landing, and there storing their provisions, advanced up Gunter's Creek to Brooksville and turning to the left, crossed the trough of the Locust Fork and entered Murphree's Valley (at section 16, township 12, range 2, east,) and continued down that valley, until they intersected the first named route at the Village Spring. This route was also thickly settled in 1817. Another route, was that pursued by General Coffee, in his expedition against Old Town. This road was thickly settled in 1817, mostly by Tennesseans.

All immigrants that came this year, had to bring and to pack their tools, salt, corn or meal, from Madison County, or the Tennessee river. As for meat, the woods furnished an abundance. They did not give corn to their work-horses, but let them shift on grass.

In 1815, several worthy citizens left the upper district of South Carolina and removed to the State of Tennessee, and early in 1817, immigrated to Blount and located in Murphree's Valley. (Dan'l. Murphree gave his name to this valley.) They formed a prosperous and moral settlement. The members of this little settlement wrote numerous letters to their friends who lived in South Carolina, and induced many of them to immigrate early to Blount County; and it is singular, that from so small a beginning, the Carolinians and their descendants should now form the most numerous portion of Blount, although the Tennesseans had nearly two years the start in the first settlement, and had choice of locations; for the Carolinians could scarcely get to Blount with a wāgon previous to 1817, and it was not until 1818 and 1819, that the immigrants swarmed through the Cherokee nation in numbers sufficient to astonish the inhabitants. The road by which they came to the county, crossed the Chattahoochee river at the upper Shallow Ford, passed through Rome, crossed Wills Creek at Bennettville, and leaving the Raccoon Mountains close on the

right hand, entered Jones' Valley, seven or eight miles east of Elyton, and then formed a junction with the great Tennessee road. It was at this point that most of the immigrants from the east entered Blount; (this part is now Jefferson County,) but not until after the Tennesseans, as in all other places in Blount, had located themselves on the best places. The South Carolinians settled very thick in the lower part of Blount, (now Jefferson) and next to the Tennesseans, were the most numerous in this part.

These two strong parties, the Tennesseans and South Carolinians, differing so much in manners, customs and ideas, quickly became hostile to each other. Several severe "bear fights" took place between them in 1817, in which the Tennesseans were generally masters of the ring. This was very galling to the chivalry of the South Carolinians; but they had to bear it nearly a year, and until they obtained help from their native State. In 1818, they received a chosen re-inforcement, and at the junction of the Georgia and Tennessee road, a "Battle Royal" took place between the Tennesseans and South Carolinians, which gave the latter the ascendancy in the lower part of Blount (now Jefferson.) Hence their manners and customs are Carolinian. In the north-east portion of Blount (the portion now called Blount,) the Tennessee character continued in all its pristine purity.

On the 7th of February, 1818, the Legislative Council and House of Representatives of Alabama, established the county of BLOUNT. The act is as follows:

"That hereafter, all that tract of country lying west of the Cherokee boundary, south of the boundary line of Township No. 8, from the southern boundary of the State of Tennessee, bounded on the west by the Sipsey Fork to its junction with the Mulberry Fork of the Black Warrior; from thence by the united streams to its junction with the Locust Fork of said river; thence by said river to a point opposite the southern extremity of Jones' Valley; thence by a line drawn from said valley to the main ridge dividing the waters of said river from those of Cahawba river, and bounded on the south and south-east by said ridge to its eastern extremity, and from thence

by a line running due east to said Cherokee boundary, shall form one county, to be known by the name of Blount."

John Wood, who resided at the time near Jonesborough, was the agent selected to organize the county. This was performed by dividing the county into battalions and into beats. The military officers were elected and commissioned by the Governor, as at present; but Justices of the quorum and of the peace, were merely selected by Mr. Wood, and their names sent to the Governor who commissioned them. Law books were obtained and justice administered. The County Courts were composed of the Justices of quorum, and they attended to a great amount of county business. The Circuit Courts were conducted nearly as at present. The County seat was first at the house of William Kelly, five miles east of Elyton. Our lands were sectioned in 1817 and 1818.

On the 7th of March, 1819, an act passed Congress authorizing the people of Alabama to form a Constitution and State government. In the Convention for this purpose, Blount was allowed three members; their election to be on the first Monday and Tuesday in May, following. (A short time this,) from the first announcement to the election! Candidates to represent us in Convention, sprung up in every quarter of Blount. The candidates having but a short time to form an acquaintance with the people, thought it best to call them together, which was done by advertising and hand bills, and when they met, were informed from the *stump*, of the importance of the election. All this was very proper; but for fear that the "dear people" might not thoroughly understand the subject, it was thought best to brighten their ideas with *rum*. They therefore treated with a profusion that has not since been surpassed. The constitution made almost every office elective by the people; and the legislators were to elect annually. Thus, our county was overdone with elections, in all of which, the candidates were expected to treat the company with whiskey. Elections are pretty much the same all over the State, but Blount, perhaps, has been more controlled in her elections, by whiskey, than any other county.

On the 13th of December, 1819, the southern portion of Blount was stricken off by our State Legislature; and the part

cut off, was called JEFFERSON COUNTY; and the line then established, is yet the line between the two counties. Thus, Blount lost Jones' Valley—nearly half its territory and over half its population.

As the Court-House of Blount County before this division, was located in the present limits of Jefferson, the latter County kept all the records of Blount previous to 1820. Since that date, our County records may be found in Blountsville.

Some years after this, the north-east boundary of Blount was extended to the Tennessee River. This was done in order to extend the State laws over some Cherokee and Creek Indians, then residing in Brown's and Gunter's Valleys. Tennessee River remained our north-east boundary until Marshall County was established, when Blount County was again curtailed to its present limits.

Although some few persons had grown corn in Blount, in 1816, it was not until the fall of this year that great numbers of Tennesseans, and others, prepared for immediate location in our county; but how they were to obtain bread was the difficulty. They saw no other way but to pack (for no roads then were made) their corn or meal from Tennessee, or Madison County. The first object of some of the emigrants, was to settle as near plentiful places as possible, and thus shorten the distance over which each man would have to pack provisions for himself and family. Others determined to make a small amount of bread suffice until they could produce corn.

This they effected by sending a few strong men, generally their sons, without families, deep into the then wilderness in the fall, to make corn and prepare for them. The father generally went with them and chose the place, and then went back to prepare for moving when corn was made. A bushel of meal will suffice a man one month, and if he has no other than wild meat, he will require even less bread. In the fall season, place three or four men one hundred miles in a wilderness, with proper tools and two horses, they will pack their bread stuff for the hundred miles—procure their meat—clear land—produce corn sufficient to bread one hundred persons one year. It was by immigrants of this kind that Blount was mostly settled in 1816 and 1817. These pioneers were a hardy race, who cared but little for difficulties, provided they kept healthy.

I will state one small case merely to show how closely they were sometimes pressed for bread:—Three brothers in the winter of 1816, were left by their father to clear land and make a crop of corn in Blount. They succeeded in their work, cleared ground, and made a good crop; and when they were done, two of the brothers returned to Tennessee, taking their horses with them, in order to assist their father to his new home; but the third brother was left to mind the crop. They left him about one bushel of corn which was deemed sufficient to last him until the growing crop would mature. Within about a week after his brother left, he discovered that part of his corn was missing. This greatly alarmed him, as he feared the loss would prove very inconvenient. He therefore went to a neighboring company to see, if he became pressed, if he might hope for assistance. All they could promise him was a horse to go to Tennessee for corn, about eighty miles. Being determined to put off the evil as long as possible, he returned to his home, and upon examining his corn sack, found that a hole had been gnawed through it. He then suspected the rats as the corn thieves. He got a string and suspended the sack in such a manner that the rats could get no more, and then went in quest of the enemy, which he found fortified in a large hollow log. He tore their sticks and rubbish out, and found most of his corn. This he carefully gathered and washed, to remove the odour of the rats, and thus saved the trouble and expense of going to Tennessee.

Blount produced a considerable quantity of corn in 1817, but not near enough to supply the vast number of emigrants. The Tennesseans, however, brought down the Tennessee River, on flat boats, large amounts of breadstuffs, bacon, iron, salt, and many other things needed by new settlers. It was in this year that the Tennesseans, in flat and keel boats, commenced pouring down their river in great numbers, bringing their families, wagons, horses, cattle, hogs, dogs, cats, and all those necessary animals that are found about a farmer's house. These were landed at convenient points, and all the livestock, both quadruped and biped, took a south-west course, in order to reach their new homes. Those who came by water, and brought their provisions, perhaps suffered less hardships than any others. They had to pack or haul on wagons, their provisions from the river; but they saved the exorbitant prices that others

had to pay. The number which came by water down the Tennessee River, though considerable, was but a fraction of the emigration. Every old trace that run through the county, soon became a road, along which swarmed for three or four years, multitudes of people of every description, bringing with them an incredible amount of stock of all kinds. Blount was thus soon filled with inhabitants; and the balance of those living currents was forced further south and west.

The settlement of old Blount may be considered as complete with the fall of 1818, being a fraction over two years from its commencement. Those two years of struggle and privation have long passed, but they are not to be forgotten by those whose lot it was to participate in them.

Packing was one of the greatest and most general inconveniences. Most of the horses that were condemned to bear this evil, were forced to start early in the morning, and to carry two hundred pounds on their backs. Near 12 o'clock, the driver would stop, unload the horses, and permit them to graze about two hours; then re-load, and go until sun-set, when he would again unload, bell, and hobble them, allowing them to graze and rest until morning, and so on to the end of the journey. This treatment caused some of the sorest backs ever known. When I read the story of Yellow Blossom, in the Georgia Scenes, my first idea was that the immortalized Bullet, had been a pack pony in some of the mountainous parts of Georgia.

The want of mills was a great inconvenience, and before we could have bread, our corn had to be *pounded* into meal. This was severe labor and consumed much valuable time. (Steel mills were scarcely known.) Under such circumstances, it was natural that hominy should become the most fashionable diet.

We had to bear many other inconveniences that are inseparable from early emigrants. I will state one of them, in which the ladies were equally involved with the men:—the difficulty attending matrimony before we had any authorized agents to solemnize the rites.—But a single case of the kind is known in Blount previous to its organization. The parties in that case not wishing to go to Tennessee, (as was usual, to be married) they applied to a very worthy Methodist preacher who lived in the settlement, and requested him to tie the indissoluble knot. This

he at first refused, but quickly consented to do, provided both parties and all their relations would enter into a heavy bond that the parties would *marry again*, as soon as proper authority could be obtained. This they performed, and he joined the parties in holy wedlock. It was the first marriage in Blount, and occurred in 1817. It so happened that this preacher was among the first Justices of the Peace appointed for the county, and as soon as he received his commission, and was duly qualified, before going home, he called in the night on the newly married pair, roused them up, and married them over again.

Corn was the most necessary crop to the first settlers, and for three or four years it was the most profitable crop they could raise, and in fact, the *only one* from which they could expect to realize money. Corn was sold as high as four dollars per bushel. In the fall of 1817, the general price was two dollars per bushel. In the fall of 1818, it brought one dollar per bushel; but in the fall of 1819, it could scarcely be sold at any price, except upon the roads, along which the great tide of immigration was yet flowing to the south and west. Although most of our first settlers were in rather indigent circumstances on their first arrival in Blount, yet they had mostly realized money sufficient to pay the first installment on their lands when they came into market in July, 1819, at Huntsville.

Many months previous to the land sales, our county was visited by gangs of land speculators, who were taking the numbers of the most valuable lots of land, and endeavoring to find how much the occupant would give for his land. The information thus gained, the land speculator turned to his own advantage.

The terms of sale at that time, (1819,) were in lots of one hundred and sixty acres each, and the minimum price, two dollars per acre, one fourth of which to be paid down, and the balance to be paid in three equal annual installments, bearing interest from the date of sale.—Hard terms! But the people deceived themselves in the thought that as money had hitherto poured into Blount from every quarter, and every article for sale had hitherto commanded a high price, that times would remain the same. Laboring under these deceptive appearances,

they attended the land sales at Huntsville, and met the Wily land speculators who were prepared to show each of them, not only the number of his improvement, but likewise the price their gang had determined it should bring at the sale. This would startle the settler, as the price which the speculators had set on his improvement was sure to be more than he could give, and it appeared certain that he would lose his home and have to commence in the woods again, unless he could, in some way, compromise with the gang. Compromises were therefore generally effected, and the settler permitted to bid off his land at the minimum price on paying the speculators a certain sum—(according to the supposed value of the lot) frequently as much as five hundred dollars *hush money*. These things were done openly and in the face of day—the occupant often giving his *note* for the hush money.

In the fall of 1819, our State Legislature passed some severe acts against such open frauds; but this was locking the stable door after the steed was stolen, so far as Blount was interested. The land sales had nearly exhausted Blount of money, and left a great portion of our best citizens deeply in debt for land. Previous to the sales, it was the interest of the settlers to cause their improvements to appear as worthless as possible, in order to escape competition in the land market. Fences were made partly of logs, poles and brush, and their cabins were small and mean. After the sales, those who bought, wished for more substantial improvements; but their debts must be paid, and to do this, cotton sufficient must be produced; and never perhaps, did the citizens of any county determine on a cotton crop, under greater and more numerous difficulties. A few of the most prominent were: the smallness of our farms, and their pole and brush fences.—The timber on our first fields, (which had been deadened but about two years,) was in a condition to drop great quantities of limbs and brush on the opening crop. Seed could be procured with great difficulty.—Gins and presses were to erect, and roads made to them. The roads to market were long and very bad. Most of these difficulties must be overcome by white labor: for at this time, Blount could not boast of fifty Negroes.

A cotton crop keeps the hands busy most of the year, so

that we had little time to improve houses or farms, and the children had little or no time to go to school. Notwithstanding all this, we planted, and grew successfully the first cotton crop, and from that time, continued to plant until 1836, when it was suddenly almost abandoned, and the numerous gins and presses suffered to rot down. Only fourteen yet remain. We now produce only four or five hundred bales of cotton annually.

Although the first purchasers exerted themselves to raise cotton in order to pay for their lands, they were doomed to suffer the anxiety which always hangs upon an honest debtor, for nearly seven years. The change of times, and the great fall in the price, (not only of cotton, but every thing else,) seemed to baffle all their efforts to raise money. Many of them sold their certificates—and all were desponding. Our State Legislature often prayed Congress for relief; and Congress passed a great number of relief laws—such as prolonging the time of payment—remitting the interest—and afterwards remitting part of the original debt. But the greatest relief resulted from an act, which permitted the purchaser to relinquish part of the land in payment for the portion retained. This act enabled the land holders to get clear of debt, after being seven years involved.

A few of the first purchasers would not grow cotton, but continued to increase their corn crops, in order to produce pork and bacon, which they properly thought would at all times command the cash. And in cases of bad crop years, their corn would command sometimes as much as a dollar per bushel. These men paid for their land sooner than the cotton growers. Had all our people pursued this course, it is highly probable they could have sold, at fair prices, all their pork and bacon, by carrying it to South Alabama; but corn would have brought little or nothing.

At the time of our land sales, many settlers were unable to purchase the land they occupied, and if their improvements were on valuable land, they of course lost them and were compelled to settle again in the woods. In their second location, they sought such places as were not likely to be entered and taken from them. We also had a large number who never cared to

own land. These, and the class above mentioned, constituted at least two-thirds of our population, and it was owing to this cause that designing men long ruled our numerous elections. The law authorizing forty-acre land entries, has nearly cured this evil. But few families now live on public land.

When the land purchasers were compelled to grow cotton, in order to meet the installments, the other classes also, were obliged to commence the same culture in order to keep up their credit with the merchant from whom they were forced to procure some indispensable articles for family use. And it was from this class that the *ginners* soon learned to look for *filthy* and *wetted* cotton. The land purchaser expected to sell his cotton in bales and was therefore anxious to have it in the best possible order; but "Tom, Dick and Harry," who intended to sell their crops in the seed, and had no anxiety further than weight was concerned, were often guilty of wetting their cotton. This practice was carried to such a length that the ginners were often *compelled* to make large deductions for *water*, after deducting more than enough for *ginning*. Thus, acquisitiveness was active in both grower and ginner.

This wetting of cotton prevailed in all the upper counties, and perhaps in all places to some extent, where cotton was sold in the seed. It was most demoralizing in its tendencies—corrupting the morals even of women and children. It was carried on in Blount until fair dealing became *unpopular*, and until men found that it was less trouble to borrow money from the Banks than it was to grow cotton for it, even if they could sell it wet in the seed.

The first wheat raised in Blount, was in the year 1817, and was sown by a Mr. Guthry, near the head of Turkey Creek, then in Blount. It grew well and yielded finely, but it was said by those who eat of it, to possess the qualities of "tartar emetic." Many emigrants brought small quantities with them for experiment, and it was early proved that our country was well adapted to wheat; but in those early times, we had no mills (or rather, no bolters to prepare the flour in proper order,) and our farmers therefore, raised but small crops of wheat.

In 1827, D. Hanby erected on Turkey Creek, a mill purposely for wheat. He procured good millstones for grinding, and good bolters. This mill, (though in Jefferson County) is not many miles from the lower part of Blount County, and the people of Blount, therefore, carried their wheat to that mill, and many of them continue to do so yet.

In 1842, J. Hendricks erected a flouring mill within a few miles of Blountsville. This encouraged wheat growing in that quarter. There is a good wheat mill near Summit, which has stimulated the production of wheat in Brown's Valley.

The flour prepared at all of these mills, is carried south in order to find a market. Of the quantity of wheat raises in the county, it is hard to make an estimate. The amount given in the statistics of 1850, was doubtless nearly correct for that year; but the quantity has since increased and is yet increasing. All parts of the County are capable of producing good wheat and other small grain while the land is fresh; but the red mountain lands of the valleys are decidedly the best grain lands that we have.

The dangers attending a wheat crop are—Hessian fly, late spring frosts, rust, smut and weevil. To prevent the Hessian fly, we must sow late; and this increases the danger of rust. To obviate these evils, some farmers, when they intend to sow wheat after a corn crop, gather the corn as early as safety will permit, and then turn in all their stock of horses, cows, hogs, &c. These quickly devour the grass and other vegetation, and by this means, effecually destroy the fly for that season; then they sow their wheat, and in this way generally escape both fly and rust.

Our farmers believe, that soaking their seed wheat in a solution of blue-stone immediately before sowing, is a remedy for the smut,—which they think is occasioned by a kind of fungi, and is contagious. If it is contageous, the practice of ten or twenty farmers having their crops threshed at the same gin, must have a great tendency to spread the disease through all their crops the next year.

Oats grow well in the county, and almost every farmer raises what he thinks sufficient for his own use. They would be produced in abundance if we had a market for them.

Rye, barley and buckwheat grow finely, but they have never been produced to any extent.

Potatoes of all kinds do well in Blount.

The first apple tree in Blount County, was a volunteer seedling, which was discovered in the spring of 1817. It is supposed that the seed which produced it, was accidentally brought from Tennessee by a Mr. Andrew Alldridge, as it was near his house that the young apple tree made its appearance. Mr. Alldridge took great care of this little plant, which proved very thrifty; and is now called, (for it is yet alive) the "Patriarch Apple tree." I am indebted to Mr. A. M. Gibson, for an account of the earliest culture of the apple in Blount:

"About the year 1817, a Mr. John Fowler, from Tennessee, settled in the County, and soon afterwards, finding the soil and climate suitable for fruit raising, turned his attention to that branch of industry, particularly to the cultivation of the apple. As early at 1823, (in addition to the seedling stocks of his own production,) he had imported the most valuable kinds of apples then known in the East Tennessee. And although he was not a scientific pomologist, yet, under his watchful care and judicious management, the apple was brought to as great a degree of perfection, as it was at that day, in any part of the United States. Indeed, some of his varieties would bear favorable comparison with any that can be produced at the present time. He soon began to transport his surplus fruit to the distant parts of the State, particularly towards the South. The name and reputation of *Fowler's apples*, became widely extended; and his ready sales brought to this successful orchardist a considerable revenue. His success soon induced many others in the county to engage in the same business; and almost all who did so, reaped a rich reward. So excellent is the adaptation of the soil and climate of this county, to the production of fruit, particularly in the valleys, that with proper cultivation, the orchard fruits of Blount will rival the finest in the world. Apples are now one of

the stable productions of the county. Not less than one hundred wagon loads of them, but estimate, annually taken to the middle and southern portions of the State, where they meet with a ready sale—bringing to the county an annual revenue of many thousand dollars. The cultivation and exportation of this valuable fruit seems still on the increase. All of this has resulted from the well directed efforts of a single pioneer in improvement.”

At first, I thought the above account of our apple trade rather exaggerated, but upon examination, it appears that Blount really sends southward, at least one hundred wagon loads of apples; but of course, the amount of money received from the same is uncertain. Our fruit has been mostly destroyed the present year, (1854,) by a late frost.

Mr. Folwer's orchard was of small extent, (about one acre only) but thickly planted with trees, and produced nothing except fruit. He kept it well pruned, but with the trunks so short that the limbs when loaded with fruit, nearly reached the ground. The tillage he gave them was with the hoe, as the limbs were too low to admit a horse under them. When his fruit was in danger from late spring frosts, he kindled as many small fires as he had trees. He had at all times, large stocks of wood ready for the purpose. The fires were placed in the center of each space throughout the orchard, but so as not to injure the boughs of the trees, which sometimes nearly interlocked across the spaces. This firing, prevented the frost from killing his fruit. It was some trouble; but the trouble and expense were small when compared with the profit. He could at *all times* sell his apples at fifty cents per bushel to the wagoners, who hauled them to market; but after frosty springs, when all other orchards failed, he could obtain one dollar per bushel for them, and thus realize five hundred dollars per acre from his orchard. This five hundred dollars was saved by making one hundred and sixty small fires at the proper time—the cost of which, would not exceed ten dollars. Thus the frosts that deprived others of the produce of *their* orchards, served to double the value of *his*.

All orchard fruits—the peach, pear, plum, cherry &c., as

well as the apple, thrive in Blount. None are exported at present, but the apple. A Railroad will, however, open a market for all. We do sometimes, make a few hundred gallons of Peach Brandy, the small surplus of which, always finds a ready sale further south.

Our numerous creeks furnish us with water power sufficient for mills and other domestic machinery, but they are often effected by a scarcity of water in the summer and autumn. We have some very good locations for water-works on our rivers which could be profitably employed in driving machinery; but our people have not the capital to improve them in this way. Our rivers are navigable, on the part below Section 33, Township 12, Range 1, west, for flat boats in the time of freshets.

The Locust Fork of the Warrior contains some very fine beds of coal, which extend from the Jefferson line about ten miles up the river, and then thin out. It was from these beds, in 1827 or 1828, that the first Warrior coal was carried to Mobile in flat boats, by Levi Reid, James Grindle, and others. The boats were built in Jefferson, but as the line between the two counties was not exactly known at that time, it was thought that the coal beds, (now D. Hanby's) were in Blount County.

Five or six years ago, Messrs. Truss, established a boat yard in the lower part of the county, and raised and carried a number of flat loads of coal to Mobile. It may be asked, why we do not continue boating coal? In order to answer such a question satisfactorily, several things must be considered:—the insufficiency of our river—which we cannot safely navigate with large boats, unless we have a freshet of seven or eight feet rise; such freshets are uncertain as to time, and are of short duration. This uncertainty is the greatest difficulty we have in carrying flat boats to Mobile; and when we get safely there, we have hitherto found sales very uncertain. Pile staves were an article we formerly exported in a small way, but our stave timber is now nearly exhausted. Beeves, hogs, corn, and poultry, with a few bales of cotton, are annually carried down the river. Flat boats also, descend the Mulberry Fork of the Warrior from Blount, laden with similar articles.

The first boat which ever descended the Mulberry Fork, was a keel boat built at old "Baltimore," (near the Sulphur

Springs) by Elijah Cunningham, in 1820, and was intended to ply between Mobile and Tuscaloosa.

Several attempts have been made with small keel boats to bring merchandise from Tuscaloosa up our rivers, some of which have been partially successful; but the great falls below the junction have hitherto prevented, and will prevent all such attempts from being profitable.

It is quite probable that the demand for coal, will, in a few years, justify, the construction of a Rail-Road to the junction of the Sipsev and Locust Forks of the Warrior: these rivers would then afford the means of collecting at the junction, almost all the coal on them and their tributary streams. It is true, the tributaries are not navigable, but they offer level ways by which to haul coal to the river, where it could be shipped to the junction on small flat or shoal boats, which could return empty up the rivers. In this way, an upward navigation might be of very great advantage, even to Blount County, and particularly the portion west of the Locust Fork, whose inhabitants have difficult and circuitous roads to market.

In Murphree's Valley, are some very fine beds of Iron ore on vacant land, within four miles of good water power. There is a number of good mill seats, also in this region, on vacant land. Limestone, good fire stone, and a good coal bed, one foot thick, are all within a half mile of the ore beds. With all these advantages for making iron, Blount pays annually for thirty thousand pounds of Tennessee iron.

One of our resources, and perhaps the greatest we have, is limestone, which nature has kindly furnished in vast quantities, and distributed in a manner so singular, as to be comparatively near each farm in the county. When our farmers learn the fertilizing power of lime, and the best manner of applying it, we can then indulge the hope, (and not till then) of general improvement in our agricultural products. To obtain lime on each farm at the least cost to the farmer, each one who wants it, can haul the limestone to his plantation and burn it in the large log-heap which he is sure to have in the spring of the year. In this way, each farmer could have plenty of lime, at no cost except that of hauling the stone from the mountains—in few cases

over four miles. And nature, as if to invite us, has so placed the limestone that the hauling would invariable be mostly down hill.

Some of our citizens have talked of shipping lime to Mobile on flats. This could be done on a large scale; but whether it would be profitable is doubtful. If such a business should ever be attempted, the best points of shipment would be near "Baltimore," on the Mulberry Fork, and opposite the Sulphur Springs on the Locust Fork. The lime in either case would be drawn from Blountsville Valley.

Level land retains its fertility much longer than that which is rolling. This fact alone, proves, that in a mountainous country like Blount, a large portion of the fertilizing properties of the soil is carried away by water. Every drain and gully in fact, is an outlet to the productive ingredients of the land. The size of these gullies increases with their length, until they become branches, creeks, or rivers; and during each freshet, they carry out of our country a vast amount of fertile matter. This is a loss not within our power wholly to prevent; but much could be done by horizontal plowing, and by weakening the rapidity of our small streams, by a judicious location of low dams placed across them in order to stagnate the water and make it deposit a part of its booty.

At several places in Blount, where creeks pass under our mountains, the entering aperture is so small, that during great freshets, the water has not room to escape, but is heaped or ponded in some places to the height of twenty feet, covering many acres of land. Land thus covered, is the most productive and durable in the county—producing thirty crops of corn in succession without manure. Nature, as if to invite us to dams, has set the example of making them, and we should not hesitate to follow and improve on what she has so kindly suggested.

Our creeks present many places where a dam of ten feet in height would cause the water to overflow ten or twenty acres of low, poor, clayed soil. Such places are commonly washed and cut into gullies by every freshet, and in their present condition are almost worthless. A well constructed dam at these places

would, within a few years, cause such lands to be not only fertile but durable.

Health would not be impaired by this plan of overflowing, as the water need be kept on the land only during freshets. At all other times, the stream could keep the original channel, or even be assisted by a ditch if thought necessary. If a freshet should leave a deposit one tenth of an inch in thickness upon the ground, this would amount to three hundred and sixty-three cubic feet per acre, and would require no trouble to spread. This is one of our resources, but like all others, will be useless unless applied.

Our roads, though hilly in places, are nevertheless rather better than those of the neighboring counties, and are kept in good repair, except at the rivers, where our bridges, (of which we have several,) are so low, that the water in freshets often covers them eight or ten feet deep, and of course, prevents their passage at such times. At some places where bridges should be built, we have ferries, and the boats sometimes escape;—by these two causes the mails and passengers are often detained. What we called the old Tuscaloosa road, is well directed, and in the proper place for all that portion of Blount lying south of the Locust Fork; but for those who live north of that river, the old road is both circuitous and *across the grain* of the country. We have a much better, as well as a much nearer road to Tuscaloosa, by keeping west of the Locust Fork to McCarty's Ferry, in the lower part of Jefferson County. Some difficulties, however, as to the right of the way, exist near the ferry, which have hitherto prevented this road from being greatly useful—to the great detriment of west Blount, a large portion of Walker and Hancock, and even a part of Jefferson itself.

The roads which lead north, are good, and have no difficulties attending them, except the mud in wet weather. The Gadsden and Moulton road, leading south-east and north-east, passes over every difficulty that can attend a road through our county—crossing each river and four mountains. The Gadsden road is not much travelled by wagoners now. Some years past, however, it was much used in hauling cotton to Coosa, for shipment to Charleston on the Rail-Road.

Since steam boats have come into regular use on the Tennessee river, most of our cotton bales go to Chattanooga; and down the Tennessee River to Guntersville; from which place, they are hauled in wagons. All roads within the county, which lead north-east or south-west, are good and of easy construction; some steeps will be found, but they are invariably short. All the roads which lead south-east or north-west, are difficult to make, as they run *across the grain* of the country; the hills are long and steep, and the rivers and mountains must be crossed almost at right angles in that direction. We have, however, a firm soil, with but few boggy places in the county—our rivers and most of our creeks being small streams and having rock bottoms.

Blountsville is the County Seat of Blount, and contains twenty-five families. The Court House and Jail are brick;—all the other buildings are of wood. It has two churches—(one for the Missionary Baptists—the other for the Methodists)—a Temperance and Masonic Hall, and a good school house called an Academy. Of the inhabitants, three are physicians, two preachers, two lawyers, four dry-goods merchants, one tavern-keeper, two grocers, four blacksmiths, two wagon makers, one cabinet maker, two tailors, and one tanner. Blountsville has no shoe-maker—no saddle or harness-maker.

According to the statistics of 1850, Blount County contained:

White males,	3,520
Females,	3,420
Total free,	6,941
Slaves,	426
Aggregate,	7,367

In 1850, Blount County produced:—

Wheat,	4,473 Bushels
Rye,	9 Bushels
Oats,	21,204 Bushels
Rice,	330 Pounds
Tobacco,	4,271 Pounds
Wool,	8,784 Pounds
Peas and beans,	3,193 Bushels
Irish Potatoes,	3,171 Bushels
Sweet Potatoes,	28,420 Bushels
Barley,	8 Bushels
Orchard fruit,	\$25.00 Worth.
Butter,	41,045 Pounds
Cheese,	605 Pounds
Deeded land in 1850,	80,581 Acres.

Value of same as given to

Assessor in 1853,	\$390,797
Taxes on land,	\$781.59
Gold Watches,	6
Fob chains,	1
Silver Watches,	17
Number of Clocks,	232
Number Bowie Knives,	1
Number Revolving Pistols,	5
Number Vehicles,	27
Horses and Mules kept for saddle or harness,	9
Goods sold in 1853,	\$18,647.00

The early settlers of Blount were not unmindful of religious duties. It cannot be ascertained, when the Methodists first erected a church in the county, or the location of their first church building; but the Rev. Ebenezer Hearn, of that denomination, preached in the "Bear-meat Cabin," and this must have been in 1816 or '17. This was the first religious address ever delivered in Blount. As early as 1817, Charles Guynn, of the Methodist order, commenced preaching, first in private houses on Sabbaths. During the year, the people collected and built a meeting-house in Guynn's Cove, supposed to be the first built in the county. Warwick Brister, also a Methodist, com-

menced preaching about the same time in Brister's Cove, now called Aurora Valley.

The Baptists were likewise early at work in our county. Their first church, Mount Moriah, stands in Murphree's Valley. On June 19, 1819, this congregation was organized, or established, by Sion L. Blythe.—Joseph Hill, was its first pastor.

In the spring of 1821, the Rev. Mr. Lockhart, a Cumberland Presbyterian, established a church of Cumberland Presbyterians in Murphree's Valley. This church continues with another of the same order, located at Summit. We likewise have one church of the "Christian" order, sometimes called Schismatics.

Most of the first settlers of Blount, as well as those of the adjoining counties, believed that lead mines existed in Blount and Jefferson counties, and that the Indians knew their location and obtained lead from them. Perhaps, this general belief originated from the following circumstance, which occurred in 1810:

An old Cherokee Chief, named Black Fox, died in the north of our county, and was buried in an old mound; and in digging his grave, the Indians found some pieces of lead ore. This trivial discovery was magnified and circulated in Madison County, and many intelligent persons in the county believed a lead mine really existed, at, or near the grave of the old Chief. This opinion became so strong, that Alexander Gilbreath, who then resided in Huntsville, was induced to visit the grave of Black Fox. His search there, proving unsuccessful, he then examined many other places—particularly the Chalybeate Springs, of which we have a large number. The singular deposit left by this kind of water, with its peculiar taste, was thought at that time, to indicate the presence of lead ore. It is hardly necessary to add, that the search in these localities was not more successful, than at the grave of Black Fox. After Mr. Gilbreath became fatigued with his efforts to discover the supposed land mines, he applied to some of the old settlers of the valley, for information, relative to the localities, from whence the Indians procured their lead. Mr. George Fields, at that time nearly fifty or sixty years old, informed him that the Indians knew of no lead mines nearer than those of Missouri and Illi-

nois, and gave it as his opinion, that the lead found in the grave of Black Fox, had been brought from one of those States. John Gunter, (another old inhabitant of the valley, who had been brought up among the Chickasaws, and spent all his life with the Indians,) gave the same opinion, as to the pieces of lead which had been found in different parts of the county, viz: that they had been brought by the Indians from the northern mines. These two persons informed Mr. Gilbreath, that as far back as Indian memory extended, it was the custom of the Creeks to cross the Tennessee river near Deposit, (Baird's Bluff) and make long hunting expeditions, annually to the north, bringing with them, on their return, lead ore.—That the settling of Tennessee by the whites was a great obstacle in their way to the mines—particularly to those of Rock River.—That the Indians had then, in order to reach the mines, to bear lower down the Tennessee river, and that as the whites of Tennessee continued to extend their settlements westward, the difficulties in the way of the Creeks to the mines, were continually increasing. To this account, it may be added, that a company of Creeks, on a returning expedition of the above kind, murdered two or three white families, which let to the Indian war of 1812, at the close of which, they were finally barred from the mines by treaty.

Although it cannot be doubted, that the Indians brought lead ore into Blount from distant mines, yet this fact does not account for the pieces which have been found in the mounds, unless we suppose them, also, to have been brought from a distance and placed there by the builders of those monuments. Be this as it may, no lead mines have yet been discovered in Blount, though we have often been visited by *lead hunters* with *divining rods*, who assure the people that our county is rich in that mineral, and that their conjuring instruments will indicate the places to dig. I am sorry to say that these ignorant wretches have sometimes imposed on the people, and induced them to expend their time and labor, in fruitless searches for lead.

The mounds above spoken of, are heaps of earth in the form of pyramids. They are supposed to mark the burial places of the Chiefs. Some of them are very old, having upon their tops, growing trees of very large size. These mounds are to be

found in thirteen different places in our county. Two or three of them are generally grouped together, or within a half mile of each other. In Murphree's Valley, there is one group consisting of three mounds, from four to seven feet in height. In the trough of the Locust Fork, there are five distinct groups.—In Blountsville Valley, (and near Blountsville) there is one; and in Brown's Valley one. North-west of the Mulberry Fork, there are four groups. These mounds are invariable in the valleys, on, or near the *best bodies of land*. This fact proves pretty clearly that the Indian settlements were *in the valleys*. Some knowledge of agriculture, may have led them to settle there, or it may have been the greater abundance of game and water found in such places. About these mounds, great quantities of flint spikes are found, which some persons believe were used as arrow-heads, but they seem unfit for such a purpose. The efficiency of the arrow, depends in a great degree upon its velocity; and arrows of sufficient strength to give great velocity to these spikes, would be so heavy, that all the power of the archer would fail to give them the force requisite to enter the vitals of a large animal. If we consider them as knives, there would be many uses for them:—such as skinning animals, severing the carcass, scaling fish, and cutting or sawing vegetable substances. Some of these spikes are six inches long, and weigh nearly a pound. These placed on poles would be similar to the Mexican lance, and would be very useful against dangerous animals, or in contests with other savages. Besides the mounds mentioned above, we find in different places in our county, heaps of stones, which are supposed to be the graves of Indians. In many other places, numerous pieces of broken *pottery* are found; and near the junction of the Little Warrior and Locust Fork, we have the remains of an old fortification, (enclosing about half an acre) three sides of which are yet plainly to be seen.

On the tops of some of the hills, large quantities of muscle and perri-winkle shells are found. As these are fresh water shell-fish, it is probable they were brought by the ancient inhabitants from the neighboring rivers and creeks, and their nourishing matter extracted for food. Most of our numerous shoals, also bear marks of having been at one time, filled with fish traps. These facts seem to indicate, either a dense popula-

tion, or that a famine had at some period visited the inhabitants.

It has been stated on a previous page, that the settlement of Blount might be considered as complete with the close of the year 1818. The settlement at that date, however, did not include the portion, since known as Brown's Valley. It is difficult to determine accurately, when that portion of our county was first settled by the whites. The Cherokee Indians held a kind of possession of it until 1838 or '39. Besides the Cherokees, there was a colony of two hundred refugee Creeks settled there, and governed by John Shannon, a half-blood Creek. The Indians called him John Ogee. This colony of Creeks was brought there for protection, soon after the Creek war commenced, by Col. Richard Brown, (a Cherokee Chief who resided in the valley,) and remained there until the removal of the Cherokees, with whom they emigrated.

In 1818, Col. Brown went to Washington City for the avowed purpose of selling to the whites, or ceding by treaty, all that portion of the country. He advised the Indians to hold themselves in readiness to leave the country on his return. They accordingly assembled at Gunter's Landing, for the purpose of emigrating; but the death of Col. Brown shortly afterwards, (who died at Rogersville, in Hawkins County, Tennessee,) prevented, for many years, the ratification of the treaty, and consequently the removal of the Indians. As soon, however, as it was known that the Indians had collected together with a view to emigrating, the restless whites thronged into the country which they had abandoned, and obtained such hold, that they never could be entirely driven out. Brown's Valley at this time, showed a motley population of Cherokees, Creeks and whites. The United States troops cut down the growing crops of the whites, and burned their houses; but with all this severity, they were unable to clear the valley of their presence. This portion of territory gave great trouble to the citizens of old Blount, as it prevented the ordinary execution of the laws in many instances. All kinds of lawless characters were found in this valley. Murders were frequent, with but little chance to bring the guilty to punishment. Thomas Davis, the counterfeiter, who was executed at Tuscaloosa, in 1822, resided there from 1818 to 1820.

He was known in the valley by the name of Scott; and it was thought that some of his pupils were left there after his execution, who long troubled the country with their frauds. "Father Biggs," one of Cooper's heroes, was also a citizen of this valley; but he was more inclined to drinking and fun, than to mischief. It is hard to imagine anything more troublesome to an orderly community, than the neighborhood of such a lawless colony as this. It was to old Blount, what Walter Scott says, Alsatia was at one time to London. It was a school for fraud, violence and theft, and offered a safe sanctuary to violators of the law, from neighboring settlements. It continued to annoy the people of our county until the year 1832, when the Legislature extended the laws of the State over it.

The proposition before mentioned, of Col. Brown, to cede this valley to the General Government, gave rise to a strong party of anti-ceders—at the head of which, was Stooka,* a full blooded Cherokee, who threatened death to any Indian who should sell or lease to the whites. He even went so far as to threaten Col. Brown; but the latter was not a man to be deterred from his purpose by opposition; and had he lived to return, would no doubt have completed the treaty of cession at that time.

In the fall of 1818, about the time Col. Brown departed for Washington, Stooka set out on his annual hunting and trapping expedition to the South. He embarked in a canoe on the Locust Fork of the Warrior, and on his way down, hunted and trapped for beaver. He passed Tuscaloosa, and went to Demopolis, where he sold his skins; and after an absence of several months, returned to the valley, to find it filled with the whites, who came in after the Indians assembled at Gunter's Landing to emigrate. This was galling to the feelings of Stooka, and he grew bitter, sullen and morose. Within a few days after his return, on some slight provocation, he struck with a board, a youth, (the son of a Mr. Duke,) so violent a blow on the head, as to cause his instant death. The Indian light-horse immediately seized Stooka, and having secured him with irons, delivered him to James T. Gaines, (an agent for the U.S. to treat with the Indians)

*Stooka, means "Little Door," in Cherokee.

who chanced at the time to be in the valley. Owing to the determined character of Stooka, it was thought prudent, in addition to his irons, to place a guard of men over him; but the first night of his confinement, he contrived to break his fetters, forced the guard, and made his escape. He procured his gun and horse, and thus accoutred, bid defiance to his enemies, and vowed never to be re-captured alive. He was known to be brave, having distinguished himself under Col. Brown, in several battles with the Creeks—particularly at the battle of the Horse Shoe—where he performed the daring feat of swimming the Tallapoosa river, in the rear of the town, and stealing the Creek canoes, in order to transport the Cherokees (then allies of the whites) across the river into the great bend. He was therefore justly considered by his people, a formidable character when aroused. Being now reduced to desperation, the Indians were afraid even to attempt his re-capture; and he therefore rode off unmolested. His course was however watched.

The news that a white boy had been murdered by an Indian, and that the murderer had escaped, spread rapidly over the country; and within a few days, bands of armed whites entered the valley demanding the murderer, and without any authority, threatening vengeance against the whole Indian tribe. The Indians knew very well, that these bands were not less to be feared, because they were without authority; and the relatives of Stooka, in particular, expecting to be massacred, hid themselves in a cave. They however sent out a messenger to the whites, praying for their lives, and promising to bring Stooka in, provided he was alive, and time allowed them to find him. To this proposition the whites acceded, and, strange to say, departed without committing any act of violence. As soon as the whites left the valley, the Indians called a council to determine how they should proceed to re-capture the desperate Stooka. It was finally concluded to send in pursuit, two brave warriors, well armed, to be commanded by Tooni—the step-father of Stooka, who had brought him up. Tooni was not to carry arms. All things being in readiness, the pursuers departed up the Tennessee river; and after going about thirty or forty miles, obtained information that they were near the place where the object of their search was then staying. Tooni then directed his armed followers to conceal themselves in a small unoccupied hut which stood near the

south bank of the river, and remain there concealed until he came to them. They were commanded to remain day and night, in the positions pointed out by their leader. Tooni then went alone to the lodging Stooka. He found him prepared to leave the Cherokees and join the Creek tribe. Tooni used all of his influence to dissuade him from joining the Creeks—but all in vain. He had determined, and accordingly set out. His route was through "Turkey Town" and Tooni proposed to accompany him to that place. They therefore went together, talking and thinking on the way, what was best for Stooka to do in his present emergency. Stooka was suspicious, watchful of his companion (and sometimes threatening) until Tooni suggested that it would be better for him to cross the river, and go through the State of Tennessee (where he was not known) to the Mississippi river, cross it, and join the Cherokees in the West. Tooni, moreover, promised to go with him, if he would agree to this course. The proposition was accepted by Stooka at once, and removed all suspicion. He became very kind and gentle in his manners. It was 12 o'clock, when they turned about. Tooni, then said, they could reach the Tennessee river before night, hide their horses in the cane, and *lodge in a small deserted hut on the bank*, and next morning, swim their horses over the river and begin their journey to the far west. They accordingly reached the river about sun-set, tied their horses in the cane; and Tooni, to assure Stooka that all was right at the hut, went forward to reconnoitre, and returning quickly, reported all safe. They then proceeded immediately to the hut, Tooni going before and entering briskly; but as Stooka entered, with his gun on his shoulder, he was compelled to stoop, and at the moment, a brace of balls was shot through his heart. This was done by Tooni's warriors, who had been placed in the hut, in such positions, as not to endanger each other by a cross-fire. Thus fell the brave, but unfortunate Stooka! The body was now to be carried back to Brown's Valley and shown to the whites, as evidence that the Indians had redeemed their pledge. They therefore placed it in a canoe, and paddling down the river all night, reached Gunter's Landing early next morning. The father and relatives of the murdered youth, (as well as others who wished to come) were then sent for view the body, and be satisfied of its identity. Some of the inhabitants of the Valley said it was not the body of Stooka, but that of a Creek Indian, whom Tooni had killed that he might de-

ceive the whites with it. To remove, if possible, the doubts of such persons, the Indians then sent for the mother of Stooka, who knew not of his death. When she saw the body, she wept, fell down on it, and cried, "my brave Son!"

The particulars of the above occurrence, were received from Jeremiah Vestal, Alex Gilbreath, and J. H. Henderson, the latter of whom, was one of the guards placed over Stooka at the time he broke his irons and made his escape. I have given the circumstances at more length, because of the excitement which it gave rise to; and because it is, in itself, an interesting incident connected with the history of Brown's Valley.

It is proper to add, that after this valley was finally ceded to the whites, the lands were not disposed of by a general sale, as the other lands in the county had been, but the occupants were allowed to retain possession of their settlements, on paying \$1.75 per acre for the same. Such lands as were not occupied, were subject to entry in the ordinary way. The settlement of this valley by the whites, has added much to the wealth and importance of Blount.

In concluding this outline of the history and description of Blount, I may be excused for a brief review of our character as a population, our natural advantages and future prospects.

One feature in the population of Blount, is their attachment to the soil. Like all other people of mountainous regions, who are cut off from easy intercourse with other sections, they cherish a strong love of home. In proof of this, less emigration has taken place, from Blount, than from other counties, composed of more even and unbroken country. Mountains and valleys, have in fact, a natural attraction for people born among them.

Blount is yet an *interior County*, and being less accessible than most of the others, is behind many of them in a literary and social point of view. Her population is however, physically,

a robust, and well developed one—showing the effect of mountain air, wholesome food, and contentment. If she cannot equal some of the other counties in the fashions and luxuries of life, she can far out-strip them in strength and vigor.

The *natural advantages* of Blount will compare with any portion of the South. Some of them have been already noted. Her soil produces not only all the grains used for bread, but is perfectly adapted to the different varieties of grass, most esteemed for the production of stock. Her climate is such as can be found only among *Southern mountains*, being neither too hot or too cold—the greatest heat ever noted being 94°, and the greatest cold, 16° above zero. The “Blount Springs,” are in themselves, one of the greatest natural advantages of our county. At these Springs, within an area of a few rods, are found the White, Red, and Sweet-Sulphur, and Freestone water. and at a short distance, the Limestone and Chalybeate. Experience and an accurate analysis, prove these Springs to be unsurpassed in medicinal virtues. Situated in a delightful valley, and over looked by the finest mountain views in Alabama, they promise at some day, to command great patronage, and to afford of themselves, a market to an incalculable amount of Blount productions.

But all of these natural advantages of our County, her soil, coal, iron and lime—her climate and mineral springs—can never increase her prosperity in a high degree, until she is rendered more accessible. The *future prospects* of Blount, for advancement, depend on this. But the inevitable laws of trade and commerce must, in a short time, open a highway to and from all of these natural resources. The people of Blount should therefore remain on her soil, and not suffer a *mania for emigration*, to lead them off. When the Atlantic and Gulf coasts open a market for the products of our soil and our mineral wealth; and when Rail-Roads have made our mountains accessible to the seekers of health, we will see the lands of Blount, not rated at *three* and *five* dollars per acre, but at *twenty-five* and *fifty*. We will then see capital seeking investment among us—our county filled with schools, academies and churches—our hills and valleys clothed with vines and fruits, and teeming with evidences of a prosperous and intelligent population—our mineral springs,

surrounded with appliances of wealth, and thronged with a summer population from the southern States of the Union. Let a highway be opened to Blount, and the people of the State will see her capacities.

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